

GRASSROOTS EDUCATION IN INDIA

A challenge for policy-makers

R.S. Newman

**ASIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
SOUTH ASIAN PUBLICATIONS SERIES NO. 4**

Sociological and statistical surveys of education in India have long been available, but studies of day-to-day schooling at the grassroots have been rare. *Grassroots Education in India: A Challenge for Policy Makers* helps to fill this gap.

In a visual, almost photographic manner, the book presents the reality of schools and the problems of teachers and local administrators in three different institutions in Lucknow District, Uttar Pradesh—a village primary school, a village *maktab* (Muslim primary school) and an English-language, Catholic-run, urban school for the upper middle class.

This vivid picture of grassroots education challenges policy makers in New Delhi, who talk of computers and new technologies while the majority of children do not finish the fifth year of primary school and never hear an encouraging word from a teacher.

Education in India is thought to be a vehicle for change. It is supposed to combat casteism and reflect a secular society. Children should be socialised into a new India, ready to participate in the nation's fast-paced development and emergence as an industrial and economic power.

Village education, Dr Newman points out, is far from accomplishing these things. India's progress is being achieved in spite of the education system rather than because of it. Only the city school described here, representative of a tiny minority, runs effectively, but its graduates, likely to be the planners, administrators, and leaders of the future, are cut off by language and experience from the vast majority of their peers.

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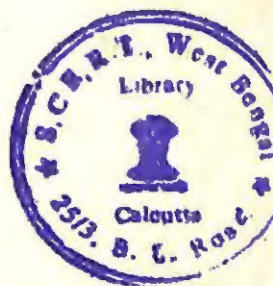
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FOR SUDHA
hamare sukhi jivan ke liye

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PREFACE

Information on education in most of the world still tends to be presented in abstract, statistical form. There is a huge number of theoretical or prescriptive studies, but to know what is really happening, we must look at schools and their cultural milieu from the ground level. Huge amounts of money are spent on education, enormous investments in time and human resources are made, without much picture at all of what conditions and attitudes are like at the grassroots. It is this need which *Grassroots Education in India* attempts to meet. It is a study which grew out of a belief that, given the number of books already written on Indian education, a qualitative, anthropological study of village schools was long overdue. Since the initial research for this book was done in 1969-70, a number of works have been published on Indian education, but there has been no duplication of the type of material presented here.

I spent December 1969 to December 1970 in Lucknow District, Uttar Pradesh, studying primary schools. I wanted to understand the workings of an Indian primary school. I wanted to know what sort of an organization a village primary school is, who is involved in such schools, and how the parents of the pupils view them. I wanted to find out what it means to be a village teacher. I wanted to know how wheat, cattle, mangoes and sugarcane are related to maths, Hindi, jobs, status and power. In short, how does the primary school, as a Western-conceived institution, relate to its Indian environment? I also wanted to do a comparative study, contrasting the organizations for village education (mass education provided by the Government), Muslim education (traditional education provided by a single community for its members), and Western-style English-language education (private education provided by the aspiring upper-middle class for its members).

My first and most extensive study was of a village school of the District Board type. Most village schools in India are of this kind. As the majority of India's population is still in the villages, it is not in the least unreasonable to state that the village school in Lilauli represents the majority of India's schools. Whatever the conditions or problems, they are typical of a huge number of primary schools in India, elsewhere in

South Asia and beyond. I studied the relations between this school, the external educational administrative hierarchy and the politics, economy and society of the village of Lilauli.

As a Peace Corps Volunteer near Lucknow from 1964 to 1966 I had begun a Youth Club in Lilauli. The members were largely Muslim. I came to know many youths well and a few of the older Muslims too. When I returned to Lucknow in December 1969, I went to Lilauli to renew old friendships and look into the possibilities of doing my research there. The Muslims gave me a warm welcome and many assured me I would have no trouble in doing my study in the village. Riaz Khan, a leading young Muslim, introduced me to Babu, the most influential Hindu villager. Babu at once agreed to cooperate and he, along with Riaz Khan, introduced me to Bhaiya Lal and Sita, the school teachers. Bhaiya Lal was initially worried but agreed to cooperate when I assured him all names would be changed, even the village name. (This has been done.)

For several weeks I bicycled to the village each morning and sat on the school verandah with the teachers and pupils. At first the two teachers, mainly Bhaiya Lal, attempted to follow the formal routines set by the Ministry of Education, but soon they returned to the more informal practices which are common to village schools. Sitting at one end of the verandah, I observed and recorded most relevant interactions. The teachers soon became friendly and plied me with questions about America and myself—to the detriment of the students. The children all reported to their parents the strange “Amrikan” who sat in school with them each day. In this way my presence and reason for being in the village became clearer.

At the same time, after school and during the lunch hour, I strolled about Lilauli, meeting and talking with villagers. I attended the 26th of January, Republic Day function at the school and took photographs. I also photographed several *kabaddi* matches. The Lilauli Youth Club became Lucknow District champions. The players and their families eagerly sought copies of the pictures and then began asking me to photograph them with their wives and children.

I was familiar with the routines, problems, and “culture” of the school after a month. I felt able to construct a realistic interview schedule. Dr. K.S. Mathur of Lucknow University assisted me in this. I tested the schedule on four individuals: four young men of 24-30 years (two Hindus and two Muslims), three of whom I knew from Peace Corps days. They were all literate and of some experience in the urban world. For the next

six months I continued interviewing villagers formally as well as meeting and talking with them informally nearly every day. The amount of experience they had in the outside world made a big difference as to how they answered my questions. Caste made a difference too, because the Harijans were less familiar with life outside the village. To many of them, being questioned by a white stranger was too unusual an experience. Others knew little of what I was asking. Illiterate villagers had very little ability to express their views on some of the abstract questions I posed.

I also visited Bhaiya Lal and Sita at their homes, meeting many of their family members.

During the whole seven months in Lilauli I made many friends and acquaintances. I attended weddings, ate with many different villagers, slept in their courtyards and orchards in the hot months, and dug potatoes with Riaz Khan and Fayyaz Khan. Even after I began studying other schools I visited Lilauli nearly every week. Babu and Riaz Khan were interested in bringing electricity to the village. An American engineer was in Lucknow, working for an Indian Government rural electrification project. I visited him twice, once with three villagers, to see if Lilauli could get some priority. Nothing came of my efforts.

Among the difficulties of research in village India is the near impossibility of interviewing anyone alone. To ask to be alone incited suspicion that there must be secrets under discussion. Also, because the village sense of time is not strong I would schedule interviews for "morning" or "evening", but often found that the subject had gone to a fair or was visiting relatives in another village for several days. Few men were free to talk in periods of intensive agricultural labour. Except for four or five individuals, women were inaccessible at all times. Weather, too, conspires against the researcher in northern India. April, May and June are so hot that after bicycling home in 40-45 degrees Celsius heat, one cannot remember whom one has talked to, much less what was said. I used to go to Lilauli at night and sleep in the village after interviewing people at dusk. No electricity and a scarcity of lanterns made it difficult to write after dark and, anyway, villagers were usually asleep by eight o'clock. July, August and September are monsoon months. The dirt roads in Lilauli turn into a morass. By that time, though, I was studying in Jalalpur.

Several Muslims in Lilauli had told me that there was a *maktab* or Muslim religious school in Jalalpur, a neighbouring village. In April 1970, I paid a visit to the school and introduced myself to the two teachers,

Muhammad Anwar and Kasim Ali. They agreed that I might come at any time to observe the routines and teaching in the maktab. In July, Fakhru'l Husain of Lilauli introduced me to Zaki, a bright young Muslim tradesman in Jalalpur and general secretary of the maktab committee. Zaki explained my aims to the committee members and other village men. Because the maktab was concerned only with Muslim education, I interviewed only Muslims.

I had learned much about village education in Lilauli, so I felt satisfied with a week's observation in the maktab. Interviewing was also easier as I was more experienced. The Jalalpur study took only two months. Because of the basic proselytizing nature of Islam (teaching non-Muslims about the merits of the Faith), the Jalalpur Muslims were eager to inform me how they operated their school. Their personal tie to the school through their religion made my work in Jalalpur much easier than in Lilauli where people were generally uninterested in education as a topic of discussion. I did not go into such social, economic, and political detail in Jalalpur as I did in Lilauli.

The third study was in an urban school of ten grades run by Catholic Brothers, all of whom were Indians. This school differed greatly from the other two schools. The teachers were of widely different cultural and economic backgrounds as were the Brothers. St. Augustine's had different problems and a different environment from the village schools. Where the Lilauli and Jalalpur schools related chiefly to the village environment, St. Augustine's was concerned with educating future professionals, higher bureaucrats or businessmen from many linguistic and religious backgrounds residing all around the city of Lucknow. The community of parents was highly-schooled, largely English-speaking and very concerned about quality education.

Dr. K.S. Mathur had referred me to St. Augustine's School as an example of an upper-middle class private school. He provided a letter of introduction to the Principal of St. Augustine's who was very cooperative and assisted me in every possible way. Because the classes were seated in separate rooms in Western fashion, with teachers rotating from room to room, I chose one class, the English-medium 5th grade, and spent a week observing in the classroom and on the playground. I talked with all the teachers of the 5th English class, interviewing each briefly. One of the female teachers invited my wife and me to her home. I interviewed the Principal and also talked at length with one of the young Brothers.

India, Uttar Pradesh, and Lucknow District have changed in many ways since 1970 when the effects of the "Green Revolution" began to spread. The population has increased. Certain groups in society have prospered mightily while others have been displaced from their traditional roles and been forced to find new ones. Political sophistication has grown as has awareness of the outside world. Traditional authority—home, caste, village—has weakened. The atmosphere of respect and civility, once so evident in Lucknow, has gone to a certain extent. Impatience and anger at the failure of society to provide expected improvements in living standard or better opportunities are coupled with the lessons in boldness and crudity provided by popular films. India is busier and more dynamic than ever: she has solved some major problems, yet serious problems are apparent. These observations are no doubt commonplace, but they lead up to the fact that despite everything, and though the administrative structure has been altered, and new education policies developed, village education goes on without much change, as visits to India in 1974, 1977-1978, 1979 and 1982 showed me. *Grassroots Education in India* provides an insight into Indian primary schools in the late 1960s and 1970s and a still accurate picture of schools today. Certainly the Indian schools depicted in this book are not far removed from schools in other parts of the Third World.

I owe a great debt to all my informants and friends in India. To everyone in Lilauli and Jalalpur and at St. Augustine's, Raunaq-i-Islam, and the Dini Talimi Council—*bahut dhanyawad* and *bahut shukriya*. I must also thank posthumously Dr. K.S. Mathur of Lucknow University, who died in 1977, for his great help in securing a visa to India and his constant willingness to interrupt a busy schedule to talk with me. To those who read the manuscript and gave encouragement and suggestions—William F. Whyte, Leighton Hazelhurst, and James Gair of Cornell University, Phillip Foster and Lloyd and Suzanne Rudolph of the University of Chicago, Joseph di Bona of Duke University, V.P. Singh of the University of Pittsburgh, Ronald Price, Lambert Kelabora, J.V. D'Cruz of La Trobe University, Melbourne—many thanks also. I owe a big debt to Jenny Peek of La Trobe University too, for her help in putting the revisions and re-revisions on to the word processor in the midst of her other work and to Susan Drew of La Trobe for typing the originals.

MAP AND FIGURES

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GLOSSARY

Ahir	a cattle-herding and farming caste of north India belonging to the Shudra, or lowest group of castes. Ahirs were the dominant caste in Lilauli.
Alha	a kind of traditional Hindu poetry which is sung rather than recited. Usually on heroic themes.
<i>Alif</i> class	<i>alif</i> is the first letter of the Urdu alphabet (also of Arabic, Hebrew and at one step removed, of our own), so the <i>Alif</i> class is the first grade.
<i>Alim</i> degree	a higher degree of traditional Islamic education. <i>Alim</i> means "learned"
Andhra Pradesh	a large state in southern India inhabited chiefly by people who speak Telugu.
<i>arhar</i>	a kind of pulse or lentil popular in the Lucknow region.
Aurangzeb	the last of the Great Mughal emperors of India, ruled 1658-1707.
Avadh	a former princely state whose great period was in the 18th and 19th centuries. Lucknow was the capital. (Also spelled Oudh.)
Avadhi	a dialect of Hindi spoken around Lucknow.
<i>azan</i>	morning call to prayer at a mosque.
Babur	first of the Great Mughal emperors of India, ruled 1526-1530.
Bakri Id	see Id ul Zoha.
Bania	colloquial Hindi term for a person of the merchant castes.
Bara Banki	a neighbouring district to Lucknow.

bigha	north Indian measure of land.
Bihar	Hindi-speaking state to the east of Uttar Pradesh.
<i>biri</i>	a small, local cheroot. (Also spelled <i>beedi</i>).
Block	a subdivision of a District for development purposes, covering about a hundred villages.
charpai	a low string cot.
dal	generic term for many types of pulse and lentil, staple foods in India.
Devanagari	the name of the Hindi alphabet, also used by Marathi, Nepali and Sanskrit.
<i>dhoti</i>	garment worn by Hindu men from the waist down.
<i>dopatta</i>	thin scarf or shawl worn about shoulders or over the head by north Indian women.
ghazal	poetry in song style, developed to its height by Muslims.
Goa	small state on the Arabian Sea south of Bombay, ruled by Portugal up to 1961.
<i>gulli-danda</i>	a children's game played with two pieces of wood.
<i>gur</i>	raw sugar, also called "jaggery".
<i>hafiz</i>	one who has memorized the Quran.
<i>hakim</i>	a doctor of Islamic medicine.
Harijan	term coined by Gandhi referring to lowest castes or "Untouchables".
havildar	an old Indian military rank; lower officer.
Hindi	the official language of India together with English. It is written in devanagari script and has many dialects.
Hindustani	a form of Hindi spoken throughout north India and Pakistan. It mixes words of Sanskrit, Persian and

	Arabic origin. Also refers to anyone or anything from Hindustan, the old name for north India.
Holi	Hindu spring festival, usually in March, having some aspects of fertility rites. Coloured powder and water are thrown around for several days.
Hyderabad	a large city in Andhra Pradesh, in south India. Used to be capital of a Muslim state of the same name.
Id ul Fitr	Muslim festival at the end of the month of fasting.
Id ul Zoha	Muslim festival of sacrifice, commemorating Ibrahim's offer of his son Ismail to God.
Indore	a city in central India, in the state of Madhya Pradesh.
Jai Ram ji ki !	village greeting.
<i>jamun</i>	a small, purple-black fruit that grows on a very tall tree.
-ji	a title like Mr., Mrs., or Ms.
ka-kha-ga-gha	equivalent to A-B-C-D.
<i>kabaddi</i>	a traditional Indian contact sport.
<i>kasbah</i>	town.
Kayasth	scribe or official caste, one of the Vaishya varna.
Kerala	a southern state on the Arabian Sea whose inhabitants speak Malayalam.
<i>kirtan</i>	chanted devotional songs: a popular cultural activity among north Indian Hindus.
<i>kismet</i>	fate.
<i>koil</i>	an Indian cuckoo.
Kori	a Scheduled Caste.
<i>kurta</i>	a long shirt worn with either <i>dhoti</i> or pajama.
Ladakh	a section of Jammu and Kashmir state, high in the Himalayas, culturally a part of Tibet.

lakh	a hundred thousand.
Lakhnavi	someone or something from Lucknow.
Lakshman	younger brother of the hero Ram in the epic, the <i>Ramayana</i> .
<i>lota</i>	a small, squat brass pot.
Mahabharata	one of the two great Hindu epics.
maidan	field or village square.
<i>maktab</i>	traditional Muslim primary school.
Malayalam	the language of Kerala in south India.
Marathi	the language of Maharashtra in central India.
maulvi	the title for a Muslim scholar.
Meerut	a city in western U.P., headquarters of district of the same name.
<i>mohalla</i>	a quarter or neighbourhood of a town or village.
Muharram	religious festival when Shia Muslims mourn the death of the sons of Ali.
Nai/Nain	the untouchable barber caste. "Nain" is the feminine of "Nai".
<i>namaz</i>	Muslim prayers.
Nawab	the Muslim ruler of a state.
<i>neem</i>	a common tree in India, <i>Azadirachta indica</i> .
paisa/naya paisa	a hundredth part of a rupee.
pajama	traditional trousers which can be loose or tight fitting.
pan	a betel leaf-arcca nut concoction. Traditional Lucknow had a whole sub-culture built around it.
panchayat	a council or governing committee.

Panchayat Adalat	a low level court of the modern Indian government.
<i>pardah</i>	Muslim custom of seclusion of women.
Pasi	a Scheduled Caste.
<i>pradhan</i>	village headman.
purabi	folk song of eastern U.P.
<i>qari</i>	one who can recite the Quran in correctly pronounced Arabic.
Rajput	one of the warrior castes (Kshatriya).
Ram	god-like hero of the <i>Ramayana</i> .
Ramayana	ancient Hindu epic about the life of Ram.
"Ram-Rahim"	Rahim was a Muslim poet who believed that all gods were one. This phrase refers scathingly to textbooks which made no difference between "false" Hinduism and "correct" Islam.
Ram Ram	a village Hindu greeting.
Ramzan	the month of fasting in the Islamic calendar, also called Ramadan.
ricksha	bicycle-powered vehicle for transporting people or goods in Indian cities.
rupee	unit of Indian currency worth about US\$0.08 in the 1980s.
<i>sarpanch</i>	the head of a <i>panchayat</i> ; the leader of many jurors.
Scheduled Castes	ex-"untouchables"; Gandhi's term was "Harijan".
Shah Jahan	one of the Great Mughal emperors of India, ruled 1627-1658.
Shastri, Lal Bahadur	Prime Minister of India, 1964-1966.

Shi'a	Muslim sect believing that the line of the Caliph went through Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law, whose sons were murdered in Iraq. Iran is the major Shi'a country. Many settled in Lucknow.
Sunni	the orthodox stream of Islam.
takhti	black painted, wooden slate used by village school children.
Tamil	a language of south India.
tehsil	subdivision of a district for revenue collection purposes.
Telugu	language spoken in Andhra Pradesh in south India.
Thakur	one of the landowning, warrior castes of north India.
U.P.	abbreviation for Uttar Pradesh, Hindi-speaking state in north central India, whose capital is Lucknow.
Urdu	language with north Indian grammar and largely Arabo-Persian vocabulary written in Persian script, spoken widely in north India and the official language of Pakistan.
Yunani	the Islamic system of medicine.
zamindar	landlord.

INTRODUCTION

On 5 January 1985, in a nation-wide broadcast, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi promised Indians a new education policy for the 21st century. He stressed that it would contain elements that would promote national cohesion, build up a work ethic, bring home the importance of India's heritage, culture, and freedom struggle, and fight communalism. He alluded to Central Schools, which would set a national standard and function as centres of excellence in every district. He looked ahead to the widespread use of new communication technology and the reorganization of vocational education. What Prime Minister Gandhi did *not* do was talk about the basic problems of Indian education at the grassroots level. He did *not* refer to the vast bulk of rural primary schools, like those in Uttar Pradesh and in Lucknow District where this study was done—schools where at least 77 first grade enrollees in 100 drop out before they reach grade eight, where 40 per cent of buildings are of temporary (*kachha*) quality, where 40 per cent of schools have no blackboard, 59 per cent no drinking water and 35 per cent only a single teacher.¹ He talked about new communication technology when per capita expenditure on education in Uttar Pradesh was Rs. 52 or US\$4 per year.² Any wonder, then, that many people found it hard to take this speech seriously?

In 1986, Union Minister for Education, K.C. Pant commented on the forthcoming National Policy on Education, talking about commitment and implementation. These were no doubt the crucial areas of concern. Many education policies have come and gone in India. The planning and theoretical underpinning are always excellent since India is not short of highly trained education experts. Admirable goals and emphases on all the right areas are hallmarks of Indian educational policies. Yet, as a document entitled "Challenge of Education—A Policy Perspective," presented in Parliament in August 1985, demonstrates, an appraisal of elementary education after 38 years showed unsatisfactory enrolments, an alarming dropout rate, outmoded teaching methods, a decline in per student expenditure per year, a failure to implement Gandhian-style Basic Education, no efforts by villagers, blocks or districts to help run schools, and lack of even cheap government teaching materials.³ Despite

expenditure, efforts by a few dedicated people, and huge amounts of rhetoric, Indian elementary schools were not doing well. Rural schools were poorer and had worse conditions than urban ones, despite being in the majority. Thus commitment and implementation, as the Minister saw, are the key areas on which to focus, not computers or high technology. Bringing education for the Indian masses into the 20th century would be a more valid goal than preparing for the 21st.

The Minister also talked about "...transforming a static society into a vibrant one with a commitment to development and change," a very surprising statement! In my opinion, India is one of the most vibrant societies in the world, bursting with development and change. In fact, most current problems stem from the rapid rate of change, not the lack of it. Since the early 1960s, Indian villagers have been increasingly committed to change. Agriculture has been transformed. Millions have moved from the countryside to the city to work in industry and construction. The question is whether all have benefited from the change; the answer is that they have not. However, education has not played a strong role in all the changes that have swept India. Education has remained static; for most Indians, it has made no contribution to the process of development and change. India has achieved the impressive gains of the last quarter century *in spite of* a disorganized, inefficient, wasteful education system. The potential of millions of rural Indians has been neglected and unused. If "commitment" and "implementation" are the key focuses as Minister Pant pointed out, what would the National Policy on education of 1986 do about bringing education for the great mass of Indian citizens up to the mark?

The National Policy on Education of 1986 contained the same phrases and well-organized paragraphs as previous policies. Concern was expressed for a child-centred approach, excluding corporal punishment, providing essential facilities, non-formal education for dropouts, higher quality learning material and avoiding preoccupation with modern technologies. Paragraph 7.2 stated: "The country has placed a boundless trust in the educational system... All teachers should teach and all students study."⁴ No doubt the above prescriptions as applied to elementary education are just what is needed, though it is sad and incredible to think of village primary school teachers, much less students, as preoccupied with any technology at all. The trust in education has faded among vast sections of the populace, as this book will show, but education is still the only available ticket to buy in the lottery of life. I fear that exhorting

teachers to teach and students to study may not be sufficient to get the system moving. Yet, overall, the National Education Policy is predicated on such exhortations and on the prescriptions of experts who have always preferred to remain with their desks, filing cabinets, and libraries instead of doing in-depth studies.

There is a certain blindness abroad in India. Where are the academic studies of village-school relationships? Few, if any, exist which show the day-to-day reality of schools in the vast rural regions of the country. Although the number of primary schools more than doubled between Independence and the 1980s, hardly anyone investigated the quality of those schools in more than usual statistical terms—numbers of blackboards, desks, teachers, etc. If the academics and administrators seemed blind to schools as important areas of study, the same blindness appeared in journalism. Take for example *India Today's* essay on the state of education in November 1987.⁵ In a seven-page article called "The Burdened Child," the several authors devoted only a paragraph or two to the vast mass of Indian children who are not neurotic with pressures of work, who do not have birthday parties at all, much less parties with video cartoons, and who do not commit suicide because of failure in school. The problems of the English-speaking, urban elite loomed large, while those of the rural masses were glossed over quickly. Forty years after Independence and eighteen years after I began my studies in Lucknow District, neither academics nor journalists have made a sustained effort to bring national attention to the parlous state of primary education in the rural areas. Without such information, no educational policy can be based on reality. The statistics, often inaccurate, show little of the true picture, though they are bad enough. Thus, the blindness among urban administrators and planners towards educational realities in the majority of the country's schools is translated into unrealistic and unworkable policies like the National Policy on Education of 1986, policies that must rely on the frail vehicles of admonition, exhortation and prescription.

This study of grassroots education in India provides an in-depth look at actual conditions. While the bulk of material was collected in 1969-70, return visits proved that school conditions had not improved, indeed in some ways they had deteriorated. *Grassroots Education in India* describes the reality of day-to-day life in the small, rural schools that make up the majority of schools in India and South Asia as a whole. The conditions that readers will find are far from ideal. All the problems noted in the above-mentioned documents are deep rooted and glaring. They cannot be solved by computers, new communication technology, Central High Schools, or elaborate policy designs.

This book is a Challenge for Policy Makers!

The first and main goal of this book is to describe in detail three types of primary school in one region of India. This is a pioneering effort, hopefully not the last, since qualitative material from all parts of India is woefully lacking.

The role of the school in the grassroots process of change—in the development process—must become clearer. This is my second goal. "Development" can mean a multitude of things. I take it to mean a process of change which is supposed to lead to a better life for the citizens of a particular country, here India; to a better national ability to produce goods and services; and to a better ability to distribute these things equitably. Within this definition is subsumed all mention of agriculture, industry, population control, education, health, transportation and communication. "Modernization" to me means the shaping of this development process so as to travel along lines similar to certain societies deemed to be advanced or progressive—those of Europe, North America, the Antipodes, Japan and the USSR. Immediately one makes such a statement, a problem of mental process arises. There is an implicit question as to why societies of a certain type are considered worthy of emulation. The colonial experience as well as the continuing neo-colonial and dependency-creating influences from the developed world are powerful determining factors.⁶ While "development" involves a legitimate desire on the part of most peoples in the world for a more secure, dignified life, to me it does not imply adherence to a particular procedural model. "Modernization" does. Though a thorough examination of education's role in the two processes is beyond the scope of this study, the context of development and modernization is very much the context in which we shall move.

The third goal of this book is to show the relationship of the schools to their social and cultural environment, and to the educational bureaucracy which stretches from village to Central Government Ministry. *Grassroots Education in India* is not only a description of day-to-day schooling, but also an examination of how much schools are affected by traditional attitudes, values and behaviour patterns in the villages. The effects of the Green Revolution and the actual contacts with lower levels of the educational bureaucracy are explored as well.

In its effort to raise living standards, the Government of India has gathered much statistical information on the various matters affecting villages. The Indian government needs feedback in order to judge the effectiveness of the organizations bringing change to the masses of

people. Evaluation of village schools by government is mostly based on such statistical evidence and measurement of whether achievements match educational goals set by the bureaucracy and planners in Lucknow and New Delhi. Action at grassroots level on the basis of such evaluation has been scarce; the "soft state"⁷ bureaucracy delays such action as long as possible. The observer basing his judgments on stated government aims can easily see that the rural schools do not come up to the mark set in the Five-Year Plans or in the National Policy on Education. The present work, however, is not meant to be just a critique but also a serious examination of the day-to-day existence of three schools and the ways people regard them.

Information based on the simple assessment of whether school conditions match government standards is necessarily pessimistic. Instead of considering the past and present realities of Indian education, government standards are based on a single set of goals which in turn are based on essentially Western ideals. Three of the Indian government's basic educational goals are "Education must be brought to a maximum number of Indians as soon as possible"; "This education must be a secularizing force"; "Practical knowledge is of great importance in an industrializing nation that also wants to transform its agriculture and public health programme." Behind these goals lie the Western-derived ideals of separation of religion and government; of socialism; of national "progress" and the idea that people can influence their destiny; of democracy; and of the need for an educated electorate. There are other, dissimilar goals and ideals involved in Indian primary schools. These are the goals and ideals held by the people the schools are supposed to serve, as well as those who teach in them. It is more reasonable to study organizational effectiveness from all sides than to examine things purely from one particular viewpoint. The fourth goal of this study, then, is to examine the organizational effectiveness of the schools from the points of view of parents and students from different socio-economic backgrounds, and of the teachers, as well as of the government bureaucrats, planners and politicians. In each of the three schools, there are different standards of organizational effectiveness to be understood. In each, the effectiveness of the school must be judged in a different way because of very different ideas about what primary education should be. The next pages contrast one kind of education with that envisioned in the National Policy on Education and in urban-oriented periodicals like *India Today*. The realities of rural primary education can burst like a thunderclap on the calm visions of ordered technological progress and nation-building.

Himachal Pradesh

UTTAR PRADESH SHOWING LUCKNOW DISTRICT

CHINA (Tibet)

Haryana

NEPAL

Delhi

Rajasthan

Lucknow District

Bihar

Madhya Pradesh

LUCKNOW DISTRICT

Sitapur

Gomti River

Bara Banki

Hardoi

Lucknow City

Rae Bareilly

Unnao

Administrative subdivision
including Lilauli and Jalaipur

PRELUDE

A beautiful morning. Cool wind from the east. Fluffy white clouds scudding across the sky. The flooded fields reflect azure and white. Numerous villagers pass, cycling to work in the city.

When I reach Lilauli at 6.50, I see the school is open. The old Nain is slowly sweeping the veranda. Ramu and two other boys have spread one or two mats and are sitting on the floor leaning against the wall. Sita calls out to me from Ram Mohan's veranda, "Greetings, brother." She is glad to see me. She is sitting on a charpai in a new dark red sari with some silver leaf decorations of a cheap kind and a blouse of the same brick-like colour. Instead of the rubber thongs, she has new black leather sandals. She has gained weight and looks older. Her stomach is sagging out; her navel is facing downwards. No bra. Sita is still recovering from a serious bicycle rickshaw accident that occurred two days after Holi last March. She suffered a broken knee. She was absent from school throughout April and May. Bhaiya Lal had the whole burden of preparing the fifth grade for its examination and keeping discipline among the other four grades. He resented this very much.

"How are you? I can walk now but my knee swells. Well, what can one do? When they took off the plaster the bone had joined so I didn't have to have another cast. Still, I can't walk easily. Today I could hardly make it. When I reached Matarpur the knee was swollen."

Ram Mohan's wife comes out and asks me where I had been for so many days. Another woman passes by and asks Sita about her knee. Sita says (looking at me), "He came to see me two or three times by himself and once he came with his wife. Nobody came from the village at all. You didn't care."

The second woman comes up to Sita, touches her sympathetically and assures her, "We heard about your accident and wanted to come, but it's so far..."

Bhaiya Lal appears wheeling his bicycle. He is dressed in the same old white kurta, dhoti and Gandhi cap. When he takes off his sandals, his

feet are very dirty as if he had been ploughing and just knocked off the clods when they dried. Islam runs out, takes Bhaiya Lal's bicycle and puts it on the veranda. Bhaiya Lal does not speak to Sita. He has two chairs taken out for himself and me and we sit. Sita comes over but is quiet. Bhaiya Lal tells some boys to bring her a chair. Riaz, Babu, Chandra, and low caste Jagdeo Singh from Matarpur are squatting in front of Chandra's house. Bhaiya Lal calls Jagdeo over and soon has him and Ram Charan moving the heavy chests and metal cabinets about. (Note: he does not ask Riaz, Babu or Chandra to do this). The old Nain sweeps out the two storerooms when the men are finished. Jagdeo and Bhaiya Lal discuss tubewells for a minute. Along with the dust and twigs that the Nain has swept out, comes a cast-off snake skin. Sita remarks cynically, "They live in there." The roof has leaked badly in the June monsoon and all the burlap mats are wet. Several boys, there are seven or eight now, spread them out to dry.

It is 7.15. There are still only about ten children. No one seems to know it is 1 July and school is open. Bhaiya Lal opens his multitude of registers but is not anxious to begin. Hari Chand's wife walks by with a basket of earth. When she returns the basket is empty. Bhaiya Lal calls her and asks about Hari Chand (in Kanpur), about her buffalo that was sold, and her other animals. We discuss the theft of my bicycle in the city. He begins filling out the registers.

Sita just sits. "My oldest boy got married on the 19th of June. The other children are all OK. In our mohalla five boys appeared in the high school examination including my Om Nath and they all failed. Hunh, they don't have any trouble remembering the story of every movie. That's the trouble, they just go and see movies all the time. Two from the mohalla appeared in the Intermediate final (12th grade), a boy and a girl. The girl passed and the boy failed. How about that!" (Sita laughs).

Chandu comes along. Bhaiya Lal calls, "Hey, Chandu! Come here. Did you pass?"

"Yes."

"And Ram Charan?"

"He passed, but Ganesh failed. Om Prakash failed too."

"Really? This was his final year too. What about what's-his-name over there (waves towards Harijan quarter)—Lambu's boy?"

"He failed too."

"And Babu's son?"

"Failed. He never studies." Chandu leaves, having spread the good news.

Bhaiya Lal stops filling in the register and begins teasing Sita. He says to me, "You know, she didn't have any accident. Her husband beat her up with a stick. That's how come she got a broken knee. (Gets annoyed remembering his own trials running things alone). Yes, those who don't do what they're supposed to always get what's coming to them. She was beaten." (Sita's accident occurred when she was taking unauthorised leave).

Sita protests, saying, "How do you know all this?"

Bhaiya Lal: "I find out everything. People tell me."

I joke: "He's got 25 spies in Lucknow who tell him everything."

Bhaiya Lal goes inside for a moment to get another register. Sita mutters unintelligibly. I tell her, "Well, anyway you're OK now." She replies angrily, "Yes, I'm OK and I've come all the way out here in spite of so much botheration and he's withholding my salary. He's just not giving it to me. They all said I was dead and he's the one who started that rumour."

Bhaiya Lal, emerging for a minute before returning inside, "I found out everything!"

Sita, very annoyed, "It takes an asshole to find out and it takes an asshole to tell what he knows."

Bhaiya Lal is quiet.

Kunji, one of the two fifth grade failures in the May examination is back again. He's cleaning the cobwebs off the walls with a pole. Several boys are running and fooling in the main classroom. There is a sudden commotion and shouts. "Hit him again!" A fight? No, Islam emerges with a dead, seven-inch centipede dangling from a twig.

Nothing has been said to the children so far. They are restless, constantly moving, standing, sitting, and talking loudly. Four or five girls arrive at 7.45 and sit together chattering. One has brand-new green plastic sandals. Most of the children look very clean today—cleaner than on an average school day.

Babu, the pradhan, passes, carrying a brass pot and bucket. Bhaiya Lal calls to him. He sits. There is another round of violent complaints and arguing between Bhaiya Lal and Sita. Babu does not know quite what to say. He encourages Bhaiya Lal to give Sita her salary.

Sita taunts Bhaiya Lal: "Were you helping the children again at exams this year?"

I intervene when she laughs at his efforts to deny it. "He didn't. I was there and saw everything. He was sitting outside."

Bhaiya Lal tells her, "See, he can prove it. It's lucky for you that Bhagwati Prasad Trivedi (Sub-deputy Inspector) was transferred as of 1 June, otherwise he was going to make big trouble for you and every other teacher who didn't show up that day."

Sita maligns Trivedi's character. Babu and Bhaiya Lal light up country cigarettes and Sita follows suit, grinning devilishly at me as she does so. She asks Babu, "Where can I get some pig oil? I need it to rub on my knee to reduce the swelling. The doctor said that's the best remedy."

Babu: "Pig oil?? Oh, you mean the fat. They melt it down and then..." The conversation dwells on pigs and the pig-raisers over in Qadirabad village.

The shake-up of the U.P. Cabinet last month reverberated in the Education Ministry, the District Board, and so on down to Lilauli. Bhaiya Lal tells Babu (partly for Sita's benefit) that the new Deputy Collector is very tough, like Mahmud Bhatt, the mayor of Lucknow. Sita interrupts to say how Bhatt has been really cracking down on sidewalk vendors. Bhaiya Lal goes on.

"They've called for a list of all those teachers who've served five years or more in one place. They're going to transfer them."

Bhaiya Lal has not served five years in Lilauli yet. Sita has.

Bhaiya Lal suddenly tells the children, "Listen. From now on, come promptly at 6.30 every morning. School begins at 6.30. And tell all the others to come. Tell everyone to send their children." That ends the message to the children. Probably few have come today because they know nothing is done on the first few days. Bhaiya Lal begins working on his files again. Sita goes over to Babu's house and stays for 20 minutes.

Dwarika Pasi comes from Matarpur at 8.30, a cool two hours late. He just walks in and sits down. Bhaiya Lal does not notice. Several children tell him that school begins at 6.30. There are 19 children present now.

Shiv Raj's grandson has come to school for the first time. He is the only first grader present. He has brought his slate and a net bag for his supplies. The other boys tease him unmercifully, snatching his bag, laughing at his angry efforts to retrieve it. He is quite bold for his age. He takes his slate and forces each boy to get up to prove he is not sitting on the bag. Finally, he grabs the bag and placing it under the mat, sits on the lump. He threatens any further attempts by raising his slate over his head. At once Bhaiya Lal warns, "Don't hit anybody with that. You'll break his skull. Sit down." The children next tell the newcomer, "Your nose is running. Better blow it." He blows it onto his fingers and wipes the mess on his shirt to the uproarious giggles of the others. The new boy always gets it. I remark on this to Bhaiya Lal. He smiles and says, "They're at that age." Later the small first grader is pretending to chant arithmetic sums in imitation of the students he has seen doing the same thing. The first day for him is only being teased by his schoolmates and scolded once by the teacher. His desire to learn and copy the older children is totally ignored.

Sita returns and talks about her case over some land in Allahabad. It seems their lawyer lost an important file, so until that is found, everything is at a halt. They threshed their grain in Allahabad early so only a little arhar was spoiled by the early rains. Damage in the Lucknow area has been extensive.

At 9.00 Sita announces, "All right, I'm going now. I have to go home."

The Nain brings her a drink of water and she leaves. Soon, there's a fight between Kunji and Lutfi. Suddenly started and suddenly over. Kunji is feeling his failure today. Lutfi cries. Bhaiya Lal orders Kunji to stand in the sun by Babu's wall. The fifth grader for the second time has been misbehaving all morning, leading the teasing of the newcomer. He's obviously trying to prove himself a "wheel" in spite of his failure. In five minutes he has come up to the veranda's edge and is talking with a friend. Bhaiya Lal, looking up, notices and roars, "Get over there."

After another five minutes Kunji is squatting in the middle of the lane. Bhaiya Lal shouts, "Get me the stick!" Kunji runs and stands straight against the wall. "Stand there or get out of here! That's your choice. Stay there or scam!"

The next hour passes uneventfully. A woman going by laughs at Kunji. At 10.00 Chandra is there. Bhaiya Lal is talking about his new well.

"I spent my whole vacation looking after the labourers. I didn't go to the bazaar, to the city, or anywhere. We had two marriages in the family. One was held at our place and when it was over, we'd lost a bucket, my glasses, and some other stuff. I'm using my brother's glasses now. There's no help for it. Ah, they're driving me crazy. I've got so much register-filling to do."

Chandra says, "Why don't you get her (Sita) to help?"

Bhaiya Lal replies, annoyed again, "She doesn't do anything. See! What did she do today? She came, wiggled her ass (i.e. did nothing) and went off. Pah!"

Bhaiya Lal closes his registers. The boys carry the desk and chairs inside. The teacher says, "You can all go home except Kunji and Lufte." But nothing is said to the two. Kunji vanishes. Bhaiya Lal and I pedal off towards the main road and the first day of school is over.

With this short description of the first day of class at a village school, let us turn to a discussion of the system in which such schools exist.

CHAPTER ONE

FRAMEWORK

"See, there's a ladder from here to Delhi. You go up one step at a time." —Banki Lal, a Lilauli farmer.

Hazrat Ganj is the main modern thoroughfare of Lucknow. A wide boulevard no more than half a mile long, lined with shops, restaurants, coffee houses, and movie theatres as well as banks and government offices, Hazrat Ganj is the bazaar for Lucknow's upper and upper-middle classes. There fashionable Lakhnavis buy shoes, see the latest movies, or sit for hours with friends over a cup of coffee. Because of good English-language bookstores with the latest items from England and America, several Hindi booksellers, a Soviet bookstore, a British Council library, and a Government Information Centre, the Ganj is the favourite haunt of students and professors from the several colleges and Lucknow University.

Laknavi men love to go "ganjing": strolling leisurely up and down the crowded evening sidewalks, chatting with friends, eyeing the women and girls in bright saris, and stopping at several places for a *pan*, coffee or cold drink. For the most Westernized, something stronger is available at one or two bars. A few cows or buffalo wander through from time to time, but unlike the more traditional bazaars in other parts of the city, Hazrat Ganj is definitely the domain of the automobile. Motor traffic rumbles by constantly with a busy fringe of bicycles and bicycle rickshaws on both sides of the street.

At its eastern end, Hazrat Ganj meets Vidhan Sabha Marg at a wide intersection where five streets come together. Nearby, a statue of Mahatma Gandhi stands in a green park next to the cream coloured main Post Office. Beyond the Post Office is the imposing Vidhan Sabha or Legislature building, home of government for India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh. A huge dome towers over two outstretched double storey wings. The whole building is constructed in red-brown sandstone,

and is surrounded by a meticulously kept garden and lawn with a driveway that allows legislators and Ministers to step from their vehicles at the bottom of the stairway. Several tall, turbaned police guards usually check entering vehicles and pedestrians. Across the street from the Vidhan Sabha demonstrations are held, with slogans painted large on bright banners or on placards.

Here, at the heart of the administrative Lucknow, near the bustling, modern cultural centre of the city, is the top rung of the educational apparatus of Uttar Pradesh and Lucknow District. This is where the village teachers would demonstrate if their union decided to strike. This is where the game of politics rages and new Cabinets are made and unmade. In each Cabinet there is a Minister of Education. Because of the instability of U.P. politics, there were three Education Ministers during my one-year stay in Lucknow. These Ministers are politicians with high salaries and other amenities. The real head of operations in 1970 was a civil servant known as the Director of Education. His job was to be "incharge of the Education Department and Technical Advisor to Government on all educational matters."¹ In the 1960s his salary started at Rs.1700 a month (well over eight times that of the village teachers). In 1970, the U.P. Director of Education had a Ph.D but this was not a required qualification. Above him stood the Education Ministry of the Government of India in New Delhi. Below him, between his office and the village teacher, lay a vast bureaucracy of many titled posts with specified salaries and duties. (See Figure 1). Let us look briefly at the ranks of this bureaucracy at the beginning of the 1970s.

There were eight regions for educational administration in U.P., one of which was centered at Lucknow. A Deputy Director of Education was in charge of the region. His pay started at Rs. 500 and kept rising annually until it reached Rs. 1200 a month, two and a half to six times a village teacher's salary. (If we imagine an Australian parallel, a primary teacher might be earning \$18,000 per annum, so by Indian scales a similar bureaucrat could earn as much as \$108,000!)

There were two classes of District Inspector of Schools in U.P., Class I for those districts like Lucknow with a greater number of high schools and inter-colleges, and Class II for those with a lesser number. Wherever there was a Class I District Inspector of Schools there was also an Associate Inspector, so Lucknow had one of these as well.

Each District had a District Board (*Zila Parishad*). The District Board was the centre of government educational activities in Lucknow District. Its actions were of direct concern to the village teachers, whose pay came from the District Board. Complaints were forwarded to the District Board, inspection was carried out by officials from the District Board, and U.P. government policies were supposed to be put into effect by this body. Funds for schools came from local bodies above village level, raised by indirect taxation, not merely given by the State. Government teachers were not directly government employees, but employees of the District Board. The District Board inspectors, secretaries, and messengers received their salaries from the U.P. Ministry of Education.

The one Deputy Inspector of Schools per District earned from Rs.250-600 a month and had to be a trained college graduate. He was responsible for all primary education in the district and had his headquarters at the District Board. The Deputy Inspector also had the designation *Shiksha Adhikari* or "Educational Leader."

One Sub-Deputy Inspector (SDI) served for each rural development Block in a district, with many others being assigned to urban schools. In 1965 there were 936 SDIs in Uttar Pradesh.² Lucknow District, because it was the capital district, had twelve SDIs in 1970. To be an SDI, one needed at least a B.A. and a B.Ed. or had to be a Licensed Teacher of the Education Department. The SDI was the lowest man on the totem pole of state educational bureaucracy, receiving from Rs. 150-350 a month for a difficult job. He was the man-on-the-spot, the one who actually went out to the rural areas to inspect the schools and supervise examinations. District Board organizational rules said that there should be about 60 primary and junior high schools per SDI but in fact there were more. In 1970, there was a standing order for all SDIs to live at Block headquarters i.e. in the countryside, but all still commuted from the city to their work.

None of the above men were individually responsible for the transfer, promotion, or appointment of village teachers. For these functions there was an Education Committee of the District Board consisting of two or three indirectly elected members of each Block. The District Inspector, a Principal of any Government Training College and a Principal of any Government Inter-College were also on this committee. The chairman was an elected politician, appointed by the State Government. Because of the political turmoil in 1970, the chairman in Lucknow District was the

CENTRAL GOVT.

MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION, NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh Govt.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION
(Political)

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

(Eight regions for educational administration in U.P.)

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
OF EDUCATION

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF
EDUCATION
(Lucknow Region)

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
OF EDUCATION

Lucknow District Board

DISTRICT INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS

ASSOCIATE INSPECTOR OF
SCHOOLS

DEPUTY INSPECTOR OF
SCHOOLS (Primary Education)

(One Sub-Deputy Inspector for every Development Block)

S.D.I.

S.D.I.

SUB-DEPUTY
INSPECTOR

S.D.I.

S.D.I.

BLOCK CENTRE AT DUBEPUR

LOCAL CENTRE AT
BABURI

LILAULI
(BHAIYA LAL & SITA)

Figure 1. Formal Organisation of Schools, U.P., 1970

District Magistrate. The Deputy Inspector was ex-officio Secretary of the Education Committee and the members of the State Legislation and National Parliament for Lucknow District were ex-officio members. The village panchayats and the Block Assistant Development Officer for Social Education were supposed to be concerned with the proper working of schools but this seemed to be only on paper.

Up to this point, we have been viewing the school organization as it could be seen from the bustling centre of Lucknow or on the organizational charts of the Department of Education. Standards were based on Western ones—the very titles of the posts were derived from British bureaucracy. The administrative techniques were based on Western theory. “Development” and “modernization,” to which all educational organization was directed, were concepts derived from the West. Urban officials had a basically British mental model of a school, influenced slightly by the Gandhian ideal. The staff of the District Board were urbanites or upper-caste villagers with an urban education. Except for the Sub-Deputy Inspector they never came in contact with village teachers, much less village parents. Up to here, the description has been of a set of urban offices, an urban organization. Now let us look at things from the village perspective.

Less than half the villagers whom I interviewed knew from where the schools were administered. Many only said, “From somewhere in the city.” The formal organization of education in Lucknow District scarcely touched those it was supposed to serve. A number of villagers knew of a relationship between their school and junior high (Senior Basic School). Others knew of a relationship to the Block. Few could explain the whole. Contact was minimal. There was no inspection of the Lilauli school by anyone from the District Board during 1970. Written communications from teachers remained unanswered. There had been no visits from anyone higher up in the bureaucracy than a Sub-Deputy Inspector since the opening of the school in 1961. Therefore, in presenting a picture of grassroots education in Lucknow District (one of the most urbanized districts of Uttar Pradesh), I feel justified in leaving out further description of the urban bureaucracy, because with such a low level of contact, the urban bureaucracy hardly impinges on rural schools. However, the village schools do suffer from neglect. The government educational bureaucracy basically abdicates its aims and village schools reflect village culture and village methods of socialization. National

policies on education that do not provide serious and feasible methods of reversing this situation are unlikely to have any real effect whatsoever.

Between the District Board and the village school there were two administrative levels, called centres. One was the centre for the entire Block, the other, at sub-Block level. For example, the Centre for Nehru Block, in which Lilauli lay, was located at the Senior Basic School at Dubepur. Underneath this Centre were five Local Centres, each with a dozen or more village schools attached to it. The Senior Basic School at Baburi village was the Local Centre headquarters for Lilauli and 13 other schools. Looking at the school system from the village perspective, the two Centres were the major contacts beyond Lilauli.

The Block Centre

Dubepur was a big dusty village astride a main artery from Lucknow about 20 miles from the heart of the city, a stop for buses plying between Lucknow and another city. A city bus from Lucknow came and went several times a day and an occasional Tempo (three-wheeled, six-seater, motor-scooter taxi) made a run between Dubepur and Lucknow. A big country market was held here every week, and in addition many shops were located along the main road. At Dubepur's primary school, a large building with 300 pupils and nine teachers, at least one Sikh boy was enrolled, indicating growing cosmopolitan trends, since Punjabis were universally non-agricultural in this part of U.P.

The Dubepur Senior Basic School had a walled garden with paths and many flowers. At about eleven o'clock, all the boys were still studying. The Dubepur headmaster had an office in a separate, small, but airy room with two barred windows. Outside, red flowers waved in the breeze. The office was very neat, only a few papers on bookshelves in a wall niche, a multicoloured picture of Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning, over the door and a big portrait of former President Radhakrishnan behind the desk. Three or four chairs were placed along the two side walls where a pictureless calendar hung. Several teachers came in and sat down, anticipating my conversation with the headmaster.

The thin, short headmaster, Rajendra Prasad Dwivedi, a 60-ish Brahmin with a white moustache and scraggly, short beard, sat quietly behind his desk. The main speaker was Chhote Lal, a man of about 40. A low-caste Pasi, Chhote Lal acted as assistant and spokesman for Dwivedi, and used very Sanskritized Hindi.

Notices, messages, announcements and things like the examination format came to the Dubepur Centre from the District Board. The Centre received bundles of monthly attendance forms with one sheet of paper recording the attendance for each village school under the Local Centres. The Local Centres also forwarded the census reports compiled by the village teachers. Other information and requests also had to be passed up through Dubepur from the various Local Centres. Conferences of all Block teachers were occasionally held at Dubepur to discuss problems.

When messages came down from the District Board there were sometimes a sufficient number of copies so that each village could receive one. Bundles of copies were then sent to the Local Centres by the Dubepur office. Otherwise the information was sent to the Local Centres where it was copied by hand and delivered to the individual schools by teachers or students. If not even five copies arrived at the Block Centre from the District Board, then the necessary number was written out at Dubepur and sent on to the Local Centres. Copying work, distribution, and collection was done by the teachers, students and the two messengers of the Dubepur school. The District Board gave no equipment whatsoever to expedite the work—no typewriter, mimeograph, telephone or bicycle. If the messengers needed to carry a message to a Local Centre, they had to borrow a bicycle from one of the students. Messages to the city were sent by mail. No one, headmaster, teachers or messengers, got anything extra for the Block Centre work. The teachers got only the basic pay of Rs. 135 a month, plus the two rupees a year increase.

The teachers at Dubepur were all villagers. None spoke English, a sure sign of little or no urban education. In dress, speech, and attitude, these men were similar to those I met at Lilauli. Communication between Dubepur and Lilauli and Dubepur and the District Board was slow and uncertain with very little feedback. The Sub-Deputy Inspector was supposed to live at the Block headquarters at Nehrunagar or possibly at Dubepur. The Dubepur teachers smiled and said, "But they all live in the city. You can find them at the District Board offices."

The Local Centres

Baburi was a large village of about 5,000 people with several mosques, a *dharmsala* (Hindu religious hostel), and the air of a splendid past. All around, one saw buildings of the thin Avadhi bricks, walls standing alone, overgrown, part of a long-forgotten house or mansion. The mosques decayed slowly, the *kasbah* of the zamindars was no more. In 1970 it was

the age of the Bania. Many new houses displayed ugly concrete statues and false spires on their fronts, the owners' name and the date of construction very prominent. An arcade of dingy shops attracted flies and dust and an outdoor bazaar was held twice a week. A dirt road connected the village to Lucknow, and there were one or two buses a day.

The Baburi Senior Basic School was separated from the village by about 150 yards of field and scrub. In front of the one-storey building lay several garden squares bordered with marigolds and other greenery. People parked their bicycles under small trees that provided meagre shade.

The boys, when they emerged from class, wore the same dirty khaki shirts and shorts spattered with Holi dyes and colours that one found in every village. A few had white sneakers; the rest went barefoot. Only a few girls attended. Two or three teachers were squatting on the floor of the storeroom doing census work when I arrived. Outside, in a spot of shade, was a table covered with more census work.

I was conducted into a storeroom and seated on a wooden chair. This room, crammed with locked wooden and metal cabinets, a big drum of kerosene, several big trunks, also locked, and a dozen or more dusty desk-like tables all piled together, served as the office of the Local Centre. A kerosene lamp, shovels, trowels, watering cans, notebooks, files and rolled maps or charts were piled everywhere. A long-haired palm broom stood in the corner for cleaning the room's two windows high up on the whitewashed brick and plaster walls. Three calendars, one with no picture, decorated this mess, along with a big picture of Gandhi over the door. Only half the room was roofed at all; the rest was open to the blue sky and the bare twigs of a tree that had shed most of its long reddish leaves. The cabinets formed a partition that hid the part of the room where the headmaster slept on a string cot and stored his meagre possessions and bicycle. Through the door was a small kitchen with sticks of wood stacked on the windowsill. The wall above and around the fireplace was blackened from long use.

Mukhtar Alam, Headmaster of the Baburi Senior Basic School and chief official of the Local Centre, entered the room and drew up a chair. A short man of 45-50 years dressed in a white Muslim cap, white pajama, tan kurta, brown vest, and black shoes with no socks, he had a small graying moustache and was unshaven. He spoke Hindustani with a fair trace of Avadhi pronunciation. Son of a farmer in the next district,

Mukhtar Alam studied through Grade 8, then completed his Vernacular Teacher's Certificate in Lucknow. He became a village school teacher and taught for 28 years on the other side of Lucknow District, then was made headmaster at a school near Baburi. Due to a quarrel he had to leave there after only a year, but was given the Baburi post in which he had served seven years by 1970. A widower, whose only son worked in a factory, the Headmaster had slept in the storeroom-cum-office for seven years. He was earning Rs. 176 a month all told: Rs. 120 basic pay plus dearness and seniority allowances. He said that the government had never given him any encouragement to study further or upgrade his pedagogical techniques. "They don't respect us," he said slowly. He could not even go to union meetings though he was very pro-union, because in a sense, the Local Centre chief was also watchman as well. "If anything should happen here," said Mukhtar Alam, "it's on my head."

Though part of the linkage between village and city, this man was firmly embedded in village culture and held the attitudes of most villagers who had received some education. He commented:

In the old days, education was as solid as a jar full of earth. The pupils studied until the sun went down. They learned reading, writing, and arithmetic. After a few years, they might have a little geography and history. That was all. Just five subjects. The teachers were dedicated. There was more discipline and more honour for the teachers.

Nowadays education isn't solid. There are many subjects like English, Sanskrit, Science, Agriculture, Art, and Civics and the children can't learn them all very well. The teachers feel themselves time-servers; they work to four o'clock, then they're off on their own business. Even then they often don't come on time. No one checks them. They pass the pupils just like that—fill in their names on the list. Or they enrol pupils who never come. They don't think their job honourable.

The inspectors have too much work now too. Before one inspector did a thorough job. Today the Inspector and Deputy Inspector on a District level can't do a proper job with so many schools.

Mukhtar Alam differed little in position, status and personal history from the village teachers I shall introduce in the next chapter. All were rural people who reacted to problems similarly and saw their roles and the school's position in society in the same way.

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The Baburi school contained the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Besides a number of teachers including four specialists in English, Sanskrit, Science, and Agriculture, there were several servants as well. For lack of a special "Centre Office" and any purely "Centre employees," all the teachers and servants participated in any Centre duties that arose. No one received any extra salary for this work. The Centre passed messages from the Block Office at Dubepur and the District Board to the villages and vice versa. Mukhtar Alam had the power to grant or refuse leave to village teachers, and if a teacher went on extended leave or was sick, he could order a teacher to go from a nearby village to substitute for the absentee "so the children won't shout and fight." (This was never done to help Bhaiya Lal, the head teacher in Lilauli). The Centre chief could also request new or additional teachers from the District Board. Whatever the District Board wanted village teachers to do in addition to the teaching (like census work) was supervised by Mukhtar Alam and coordinated from Baburi. The census reports done in three months of 1970 by each primary school teacher were checked and systematized by the teachers at Baburi, then wrapped and sent to Dubepur. The Centre chief made infrequent trips to the villages to inspect or deal with problems. There were inspectors who should have done this work, and besides, Mukhtar Alam taught the same hours as did his village teachers. Mukhtar Alam never summoned the teachers to Baburi for conference, as all conferences met at the Block Centre.

Village school and Local Centre came into closest contact at examination time. Then all the fifth graders from the Centre villages arrived at the Senior Basic School to take their first and final examination of primary school. Whether or not a pupil went on to the sixth grade depended entirely on this one day. Five years of schooling and future careers rested in the balance. The school year ran from July to May so the examination was held early in May, the hottest month of the year. Chapter Three provides a full description of the examination, though by 1982, the fifth grade examinations were held in the village and children no longer had to go to Baburi. An urban official's attendance was no longer required so the teachers graded the examinations themselves.

The Union

All teachers in government schools were members of the All-India Primary Teacher's Union, paying one rupee a year in dues. The Union had a state branch called the Uttar Pradesh Adhyapak Mandal which in turn

had branches at District level. The Lucknow District organization was composed of the teachers of Grades 1-8 in all the government schools. The teachers in charge of a Block Centre or a Local Centre had no special status in the union. The union ran a co-operative credit society from which full-time teachers could borrow money, but its main function was to bargain for better pay and conditions.

Union meetings might occur throughout the year, but there was no fixed number to be held at the national, state, district or local level. (The local level refers to meetings of the teachers in one Local Centre).

While I was associated with the Lilauli school, Bhaiya Lal and Sita, the teachers, attended one union meeting. The paucity of activity may have been due to the unsettled political conditions in the state. Since the Union had to bargain for pay increases with the government, it followed that rapid changes in government disrupted bargaining. A new government did not necessarily feel responsible for the promises of the old.

The union meeting was held in January at the District Board offices located in a large cluster of government offices and courthouses in the area of downtown Lucknow known as Roshan ud-daula. Many buildings here were dilapidated palaces dating from the Nawabi times before 1857. The District Board occupied a more modern building in an insipid style, pale yellow in colour. The large, well-kept lawn, enclosed by a driveway, was walled off from the sidewalk and separated from the driveway by a thick hedge. The hedge, the outside wall, and building itself were surrounded by a profusion of flowers.

The meeting was scheduled for 11 a.m. By 12.30 a large number of teachers were present. They were talking in groups, paying their dues, signing attendance sheets that were circulating through the crowd, and gradually drifting onto the lawn where the meeting would take place. Both urban and village teachers had come. The vast majority were village teachers. There were perhaps 100 women at most, all in sari except for half a dozen in *burqa*, the black head-to-foot veil of Muslim women.

By 1 p.m. when the meeting began, there were about 400 teachers standing on the sides or sitting on the lawn. A few carpets laid on the grass were occupied by those at the front. Bhaiya Lal, not dressed for any special occasion, talked to one or two acquaintances. All the women sat together, separate from the men. Sita was not in sight though afterwards she swore she had been there.

About 30 dignitaries, union officers, sat in a semi-circle of chairs, facing the crowd. A microphone and loudspeaker were set up. The main speaker, Hira Lal Patwari, the Head of the All-India Teacher's Union, arrived a little late. He was a very short Assamese who came dressed in a black suit, in contrast to the Indian dress of the majority of teachers and local officials. When Patwari arrived he was garlanded by the representatives of each Block, the city teachers and the District organization. Chants were begun: "Long live Hira Lal Patwari!" With raised fists, they shouted a slogan:

"Jab tak shikshak bhuka hai

Gyan ka sagar sukha hai!"

(As long as the Teacher is hungry

The ocean of knowledge is dry!)

Numerous officials followed one another to the microphone. The sun was very hot and directly in the crowd's eyes. Finally Patwari stood to speak after a young teacher had read a long announcement in official Hindi that was printed and in everyone's hands already. As Patwari came to the microphone the crowd listened attentively to what their leader was saying. Patwari spoke in strongly accented Hindi, but several teachers sitting near me appreciated his using their language and commented that he spoke well. The union leader's review of current problems stretched into an hour. There were visible signs of restlessness. Bhaiya Lal began reading his newspaper. Finally, Patwari got down to business. The U.P. teachers were the lowest paid in India. Some states paid as much as Rs. 400 to start, while in U.P. teachers started at Rs. 125. Also, "contributions" for Gandhi Centenary celebrations had been deducted from some teachers' salaries without authority. This type of exploitation must stop! Promises had not been kept! Patwari was going to present the teachers' demands again at the State Legislature across town. If no results were forthcoming there would be a hunger strike in front of the Legislature! These last statements were well received. Slogans, and "Long Live Hira Lal Patwari," resounded once more. The meeting adjourned after three hours.

Bhaiya Lal, the head teacher at Lilauli village, was not particularly involved or enthusiastic about the Teachers' Union. If it won any benefits for him, he would accept them without emotion. Other teachers felt more strongly. For example, Mukhtar Alam said:

I think the Teachers' Union is very successful. It's got for us whatever raises we've received. (Smiles). I recall the strike we had in 1949. The police rounded up demonstrators outside the Legislature in the city and took them all over to Harauni (a far-off town in Lucknow District) and left them there. But we got a raise.

Asked whether the All-India Teachers' Union was a successful organization, a group of teachers at Dubepur responded with an enthusiastic "Yes!" One teacher went on to explain developments after the January union meeting in Lucknow. The hunger strike in front of the State Legislature that Patwari undertook to lead at the meeting described above was cancelled when the U.P. government resigned. Union leaders had to engage in talks with the new ministry. The fast threatened in January was to remind the state government of a promise made in 1967, during President's Rule in U.P. Relays of eleven teachers from all over the state had fasted one day each in front of the Legislature for 96 days. The Governor (there being no Chief Minister under President's Rule) agreed to raise trained teachers' pay to Rs. 194 monthly, but this had not been implemented by 1970. (By 1982, however, a beginning primary teacher could earn Rs. 350 a month.)

The union was an important but rather removed part of most teachers' lives. A few might have been involved, but most seemed to be like Bhaiya Lal. The majority of teachers lived and worked far from the urban centre of Lucknow District and seldom visited union headquarters. Local meetings were extremely rare. Because of political instability and the conditions that created Myrdal's "soft state" (where decisions are not carried out, rules not enforced, rewards and sanctions seldom applied), the teachers' union up to 1970 had not been successful in improving conditions. Promises were made but were not kept.

Other than the Local Centre, the Block Centre, the union, and to some extent, the District Board, the multiple levels of the educational bureaucracy had very little impact on Lilauli's school, teachers, and pupils. Somebody set certain texts and decided on a particular curriculum, timetables and procedures. The decisions were made "on high." Virtually no attention was paid to whether any of these things were being used: Myrdal's "soft state" condition again. The teachers received their salaries regardless. Repairs to the facilities were left to the village. No one in Lilauli, not a single person, would know who was responsible for any of the decisions that affected children. Never mind a particular responsible

individual—they would not even know the name of the office or organization. Even Bhaiya Lal only had a vague idea. He was familiar with the hierarchy only up to the District Board level.

To emphasize the gap between the rural and urban sections of the educational framework, let us look at one of the rare strained moments when they actually met.

On the May morning when the fifth graders took their examination at Baburi, I saw an urban official in the countryside for the first and only time during my year's stay. Bhagwati Prasad Trivedi, the Sub-Deputy Inspector for the Baburi Local Centre, arrived by bicycle, three hours and twenty minutes late. Unlike the village teachers anxiously awaiting his presence, Trivedi wore Western clothes—terylene shirt, pants, expensive sandals, sunglasses and a sun helmet. The sun helmet, quintessentially British, symbolized his role as a "delicate" urban official reluctantly venturing out into the countryside. The other items merely served to contrast his identity as an urban, Westernized man with the village teachers' rural, firmly Indian background. Trivedi was a Brahmin. As he dismounted from his bicycle, all the teachers rushed forward and touched his feet, symbolizing their dependence on him and deference to his social and professional rank.

The S.D.I., placing the helmet under his arm, took a quick look into one examination room, said something in English in an impressive manner, and disappeared into a room especially prepared for his visit. He soon sent for me, very surprised to see a foreigner in such a place. We spoke in English the whole time—not a single teacher could speak English. Trivedi was a double M.A. in History and Political Science and wished to go abroad to study further. He had already written several books on political matters. His wife was principal of an urban school—the wives of many teachers would have been illiterate and none would venture to work outside the home.

In every way, Trivedi was the first city man on the "ladder from the village to Delhi." He knew it, and stressed it as much as he could. The teachers knew it too, showing it with their exaggerated deference, but criticizing the man bitterly when he was not present. The gulf between village and urban levels of the framework could not have been more apparent.

CHAPTER TWO

ORIGINS

The wide gap between rural and urban was not always the most prominent contrast in Indian education. For most of India's history, the mass of people remained illiterate. Availability and quality of schooling were moot points when villages usually had no schools at all. There was, however, a significant contrast in educational methods that has remained important, both for understanding Indian attitudes towards teachers and education and for understanding how Indian schools and grassroots education have come to be the way they are.¹

Traditionally, both Hindus and Muslims had two patterns of education, differing in style and intent. The first pattern sprang from religion, and among Hindus, centered on a guru. The guru was a Brahmin, a man steeped in knowledge of the Hindu Great Tradition. He taught knowledge of the sacred books of Hindu wisdom, ritual practice, and Sanskrit grammar because Sanskrit, rather than the vernacular, was considered the language of culture. His male pupils, mostly Brahmins too, were disciples gathered at the feet of a moral and spiritual guide, for the most important education they received was not what they painstakingly committed to memory; it was in the example of the guru himself. The tie between guru and disciple was the basic relationship. Disciples served their teacher in every way, often remaining with him ten years or more. In turn, the guru treated the disciples as his children, avoiding harsh punishments and, above all, taking no fees. Brahmin boys learned what they needed to be the next generation of religious leaders. Since religion was the underlying force in society—the ideological basis—all disciples, Brahmin or not, learned the moral and cultural precepts that were the basis of social order. In short, if the guru-disciple relationship is viewed as a drama, then the disciple tried to absorb the form and inner emotion of the guru's acting rather than merely to memorize particular lines. This pattern of education was training in life style and moral values, not preparation for a job. The guru—Brahmin, teacher and moral example—was a revered figure throughout Hindu society; even kings prostrated themselves before famous gurus.

Muslim religious teachers were not so high in status perhaps, but they were certainly respected and revered. They taught at schools and colleges that were often centered around mosques. The traditional lower level schools were called *maktab*, while the higher level ones were known as *madrasa*. One link with the guru pattern of education was the emphasis on memorization. Muslims who memorized the entire koran were given the title *hafiz*, a designation still very much in use today. (See Chapter Four). But while Muslim teachers were also supposed to be moral examples, there was a fundamental difference between traditional Hindu and Muslim education in that the latter focused on the Muslim world outside India. The students learned Persian and Arabic (in the case of Arabic, often without understanding a single word), and if they studied geography or history, it was of the "Near East." Keay's book contains a long diatribe by the Emperor Aurangzeb against his tutor, berating him for not giving him necessary knowledge of Indian conditions and languages.² Islam, as an international religion, focused Muslim minds on non-Indian matters. The Muslims of the village of Jalalpur inherited a cultural tradition that always looked west to the Islamic heartland for inspiration. In Mughal times, as now, the best Muslim scholars went abroad to study at Islamic centres like Al Azhar in Cairo. The *maktabs* of Lucknow district reflect an outward orientation to this day. Children still spend a disproportionate amount of their school time learning to read and pronounce Arabic, a language of which they comprehend nothing. In contrast, the Hindu cultural and religious focus has always been India.

While the Muslim tradition of religious education is still alive, albeit mixed with more secular varieties, the guru pattern of education for the young has almost disappeared. The *maktab* I have written about here is a direct descendant of the *maktabs* of Mughal days, but the village and city schools have nothing in common with the guru-disciple relationship. They are closely linked to the second pattern of education, that of the *pathshala*.

A *pathshala* was almost always a secular school, sponsored by a particular caste or wealthy individual, where children learned some reading, writing and arithmetic, plus any special skill needed in the conduct of their traditional occupation. Since most such schools were sponsored by merchant or administrative castes, the special knowledge most commonly involved was account-keeping. *Pathshalas* were located in large villages, towns and cities. Teachers were mere employees,

respected, though poorly paid, of varied castes, who were not comparable to an exalted guru. The guru-disciple tradition remained the ideal in Hindu thinking, but in practice, the *pathshala* schoolmaster was more common.

The style of such education set the tone for the village schools of modern India. Learning was by memorization—the pupils sitting on a veranda floor in rows, laboriously copying letters onto their wooden tablets with chalky ink and reed pen, or chanting lessons out loud in ragged “unison” under the watchful eye of the teacher. As little emphasis was put on seating all pupils by a strict system of grades, younger pupils sat together. Classes were conducted in the regional vernacular and religion played no part, for this was job training or general preparation for administrative tasks. As part of the latter, in the Muslim period, Persian was often a key subject because it was the language of administration (and remained so up to 1839). Thus, through these schools, a tradition developed of non-religious education with lower status, non-Brahmin teachers. The present schools are the direct descendants of the *pathshala* in tone and style, and the position of modern teachers is at least in part influenced by this traditional schoolmaster role.

The British made little effort to develop the *pathshala*. The famous Anglicist-Orientalist controversy occupied their educational thinking for many decades: whether to use English to teach Western knowledge or to use Sanskrit and Arabic to continue the traditions of classical learning. Brian Houghton Hodgson (1800-1894), seems to have spoken out during the “Great Debate” in favour of using the vernacular languages in the already extant village vernacular schools. He was ignored. English language education became prestigious in the minds of Indians as Persian was dropped in favour of English and English education led to jobs in the burgeoning bureaucracy. As the nineteenth century progressed, however, it became obvious that English education would not “trickle down” to the masses as leading Anglicists had argued. The British administration turned to vernacular education finally, as the sort most suited to large number of Indians. By Hodgson’s death in 1894, there were four million pupils in Government-recognized schools and colleges of whom three and a half million were receiving entirely vernacular education.³ Old style *pathshalas*, if they still existed, were not recognized by the Government, but although the new vernacular schools were not called *pathshalas*, their teachers must have had intimate ties with the old system. Many would

have been recruited from *pathshalas* to teach in the British schools; others would have received part of their own education in a *pathshala*. The parents of pupils, too, would have had the *pathshala* in mind as a model of what a school should look like. There is a strong case, then, for saying that the British-administered vernacular schools, the forerunners of today's village primary schools, were built very much on the pattern of the traditional *pathshala*.

It is obvious that *maktabs* are in a traditional mode while St. Augustine's, the urban school described in Chapter Five, reflects a modernizing Western tradition with many of the pedagogical methods and administrative forms developed over the last century. Because it is an elite school, it must be considered atypical of the vast network of primary schools covering India. The village school at Lilauli is more typical of grassroots institutions not only in India but in the whole sub-continent if not beyond. Such village schools have links, not only with the *pathshala* and the British vernacular primary schools that lasted till Independence, but with British education itself, and it is to that link I wish to turn now. Educational practice and "mores" in nineteenth century Britain are relevant to understanding contemporary Indian village schools.

Present-day observers of Indian rural schools may be appalled at the heavy use of corporal punishment, the poor equipment, untrained teachers and bad discipline. All these ills were plentiful in the reports of English schools during the 1850s. We read that the buildings were in bad repair, the teachers made numerous spelling mistakes, and there was little life or spirit among the children. From the 1860s there were descriptions of the sing-song memorization and recitation of grammar and geography lessons. A report said the chief aim of teaching was "to produce prize pupils and organize showy public examinations, rather than to lay the foundations of a good education."⁴ The main duty of first graders in English village schools was to chant the alphabet and the numbers from one to a hundred. The payment of grants to support schools and teachers on the basis of the pupils' examination results lasted from 1862 to the turn of the century. This provided a great incentive to mere rote teaching. An 1870 report described a situation very much like the one plaguing Indian educators today:

It is found possible, by ingenious preparation, to get children through the Revised Code examination in reading, writing, and ciphering, without their really knowing how to read, write, and cipher.

To take the commonest instance: a book is selected at the beginning of the year for the children of a certain standard; all the year the children read this book over and over again and no other. When the Inspector comes they are presented to read from this book; they can read their sentence or two fluently enough, but they cannot read any other book fluently.⁵

With such problems widespread at home, British educational administrators would not have been concerned to eliminate them in India. These defects might have been regarded as inevitable in a public school system.

The last half of the nineteenth century saw the introduction into Indian schools of classes with graded curricula combined with annual examinations for promotion. These concepts were adopted from the system in England. Indians traditionally having treated the whole body of children as one class, the new arrangements of classes meant great difficulties for the teacher in small rural schools. He had to manage four or five grades at a time, moving each through the required curriculum. The old system of using pupil monitors had been discarded as antiquated. New syllabuses were more complex, not just confined to the three R's. "The syllabus was continually being amplified because contemporary England was in process of revising her syllabus in a similar manner."⁶ The new curricula were basically urban in character as Britain had become an urban society. Village children in India profited only marginally from the new subjects—if their teacher could teach them. Trapped by organizational transfers from a society thousands of miles away, Indian teachers compensated by training pupils just to pass examinations. Teachers were, and are, evaluated by both village and government in terms of their pupils' examination results. The present situation greatly resembles that of nineteenth century England. Teachers are forced to get results by fair means or foul. Modern school inspection still reflects the concerns or lack of concern produced by such a system. Inspectors check record-keeping and small mistakes made when pupils read assigned texts. The overall educational environment does not interest them. Educational reforms in England changed the attitudes of teachers by changing the organizational procedure. Indian schools continue to labour under English educational concepts of the last century.

Both village and ordinary urban schools in India remain firmly in a traditional-cum-colonial mode, coloured by all four styles discussed

Hindu GURU	Hindu PATHSHALA	Muslim MAKTAB	British Colonial PRIMARY SCHOOL	Modern India PRIMARY SCHOOL
teacher as moral guide	teacher as paid employee	teacher as religious figure	teacher as paid employee	teacher as paid employee
cultural values		cultural values		
discipline of respect	traditional discipline	traditional discipline	traditional discipline	traditional discipline
rote learning	rote learning	rote learning	rote learning	rote learning
religious/moral orientation	secular, work-orientation	religious orientation with some work-related studies	secular, examination orientation	secular, examination orientation
Indian focus	Indian focus	non-Indian focus	non-Indian focus	Indian focus
classical language-Sanskrit	vernacular but administrative languages like Persian taught	classical language-Arabic	vernacular but leaning towards English if at all possible	vernacular

Figure 2. India's Five Educational Traditions

above. A chart may help to clarify the similarities and differences between them. (See Figure 2). Except for *maktabs*, primary schools are examination-oriented and aim at motivating the greatest possible number of pupils towards secondary and tertiary education.

Education is available to more Indian children now than ever before. The number of primary schools in Uttar Pradesh increased from 19,017 in 1946 to 61,095 in 1969 and 66,296 in 1978.⁷ The number of pupils in primary schools in the state increased from 1.3 million in 1946 to 8.7 million in 1978.⁸ The number of teachers is necessarily greater as well, with 234,000 at primary level in 1978, including 41,600 women.⁹ Despite its examination orientation, Indian education focuses less on Europe or the Islamic world and more on India than at any time between the medieval age and 1947. Modern Indian education is more relevant than that in bygone days, but it still may not be relevant enough.

INTRODUCING LILAULI: A DAY AT SCHOOL

A dozen small children are already standing or moving about the veranda at 9.50. Neither teacher has yet arrived. Some pupils, seeing this, wander off in different directions. Two boys set up Bhaiya Lal's table and chair, while old Nain employed as school servant at Rs. 20 a month, squats and sweeps the veranda, raising clouds of dust. Other children bring out the rolled-up burlap mats and spread them.

10.10. Sita arrives on foot from the main road. She is wearing a green sweater, a cheap cotton print sari—white with purple flowers—button earrings of gold colour, a bright vermilion forehead mark of the paste-on variety, watch on her left wrist and a silver band on her right, a silver toe ring on each second toe, and faded blue rubber thongs. She carries a red handkerchief.

10.30. All the pupils line up in the dirt lane in front of the school facing the veranda where Sita and two fifth grade-girl leaders are standing. Counting the two up front, there are 36 pupils present. Hands folded, palms joined, they chant a non-denominational prayer. The leaders guide the others. Sita is silent. Next, all sing Jana Gana Mana, the national anthem, in a monotone. The children at one end of the line are ahead of those at the other. Several words are mispronounced of the Sanskrit verses. Sita does not sing. Finally, the two girls shout, "Bharat Mata Ki ..." and with great relish the assembled pupils roar "Jai." (Victory to Mother India!) This is repeated three times and the morning ceremony is over.

Now all sit on their respective burlap mats. Some pupils chant their lessons, some copy into their notebooks. The smaller ones are blackening their slate boards. Sita talks with two women passing by. Six more children arrive. There is a lot of talking. The old Nain in a faded yellow sari, checkered blouse, and silver bangles on each withered black wrist, stands vacantly in front of the veranda. A girl of 20, assisting the old woman, brings a bucket of water in which some pupils wet their ink bottles. Every minute at least one child comes up to Sita and asks something; all address her as "Bahin-ji" (sister).

10.45. Bhaiya Lal arrives by bicycle. He is wearing a blue half-coat, Gandhi cap, kurta, dhoti, no socks, and his favorite yellow-brown canvas sneakers. As soon as he arrives, he issues several orders. 1. He rearranges the mats that Sita had ordered to be laid in a certain way. 2. He has two boys put his cycle in the store room. 3. He tells two boys to bring out the blackboard and its stand. Two lizards drop off the stand and slowly, sluggish with cold, crawl into the weeds by the side of the school. 4. He directs a boy to open all the window shutters in the main classroom. The boy is so small that he must climb on to the window sill to reach the shutter fastener.

Bhaiya Lal teaches one class at a time in a very loud voice that carries over the low chatter of the pupils not being taught. He starts with fifth grade arithmetic. The rest of the pupils study by themselves, copying lessons into notebooks or working on their *takhti*. The smaller children, the owners of the wooden tablets, rub oil on the surface to blacken them and erase the white ink. They begin their practice in writing the letters of the Devanagari alphabet. Bhaiya Lal's arithmetic lecture is occasionally interrupted by Sita, who scolds the children to sit down or keep quiet. She is doing nothing, waiting for all the small children in the first and second grades to clean their slateboards, draw new lines, and get a few letters written.

Babu and Chandra are going to the city. They wheel their bicycles by the open veranda and wave goodbye to me.

11.00. Bhaiya Lal suddenly stops and asks Sita, "What time is it?" She is still doing nothing. "Eleven." A farmer comes and stands barefooted among the children sitting on the veranda. He listens to Bhaiya Lal teach arithmetic, then has a short conversation with a woman passing by with a brass pot in her hand. Bhaiya Lal works out each

problem on the board and carefully explains each step. After the explanation he tells the fifth graders to copy the written-out problem into their notebooks.

The third grade is copying a lesson about Jahangir and Kashmir from their readers into their notebooks. They use their homemade pens of cane and little bottles of blue-black ink.

11.10. A little girl arrives and sits down. Nothing is said.

11.15. Sita is very patiently helping the first graders to write. She shows them the right way to form the letters. It is very hard to write clearly with the white ink. She pulls the choti (unshaved tuft of hair on the back of the head) of a boy who has not put lines on his board.

Two of the smallest children start fighting and one begins to cry. Bhaiya Lal shouts to Sita. "Separate them!" Another boy is blowing snot out of his nose. Sita snaps, "Go do it over there!" He goes three steps off the veranda, blows a great amount into his hand and flips it on the ground by an ox-cart parked next to the school.

A second grader stands up with his palms together in namaste posture, asking Sita something.

"Didn't you shit this morning?" she says, annoyed. The supplicant sits down immediately. After 20 seconds or so she says, "OK, go."

He goes off, then she suddenly shouts, "Hey, where are you going?" He is heading home when he is supposed to relieve himself near the school.

11.30. Two children step off the veranda and are playing quietly in the dirt. The farmer, having observed school for half an hour, goes over and wagging his finger, tells them to study and not leave the veranda. He departs after this advice.

Sita leaves to relieve herself behind the school and immediately the level of chatter rises considerably. Bhaiya Lal puts on his glasses and continues the fifth's arithmetic class. He uses problems containing familiar things: rupees, sacks and bicycles. Sita returns but the noise does not subside. After a couple of minutes, she hushes them by picking out one particular offender, "Ramesh. You are talking a lot!" All become quiet. A dog, thin and yellow-brown, comes and stands by Bhaiya Lal. He

notices. "Scram!" he shouts very loudly. None of the children pay any attention. Bhaiya Lal gives yet another problem: "Vijay has decided to buy a cycle for Rs. 250..." He poses the whole problem and disappears, leaving his glasses on his maths book, whose pages are gently waving in the breeze. When he comes back from behind the school, Bhaiya Lal repeats the problem and helps solve it.

Sita is not doing anything except cleaning her glasses with the red handkerchief. Ramesh is still talking loudly, but she ignores him. Two boys get up and leave. No one says anything.

11.45. Up to now, Sita has helped half a dozen small children to write. Other than that she has only sat and hushed the noisiest ones. Now she has one of the third graders take her chair and put it up against Babu's brick wall across the lane. All the third grade stands in a semi-circle facing her. She puts on her glasses and hears their reading—the story about Jahangir and Kashmir. A few first graders follow the group and one speaks up at random. "Shut up!" he is told. The outer edge of the semi-circle has moved in to avoid a cow led by a farmer. The children remaining on the veranda are not working at all. They are playing and talking. One or two are standing, the rest are sitting.

11.50. Jai Ram brings a crying third grader to the school. The boy is alternately crying and blowing his nose on his shirt tail. The young man says, "I found him in the field." Then to explain the crying, "He's taken a lot of beating." Still sniffing the boy takes his place in the group around Sita. During this episode there is a deathly hush. It is not produced by fear, rather by intense curiosity. Even Bhaiya Lal stops teaching.

The five fourth graders stand against the school wall for their Hindi lesson. They alternately read aloud together and hear Bhaiya Lal lecture on the Mahabharata. He writes pure Hindi vocabulary of a Sanskritic nature and their Hindustani equivalents on the blackboard. Bhaiya Lal reads aloud. The children follow his reading down to the intonation in their repetition. On the word "kya," the children all pronounce it "ka" in village style.

The fifth grade is squatting in the dirt outside the veranda doing their "book" agriculture. They study well, all conferring together. The first two grades are completely at ease except one girl still practising penmanship.

12.00. A girl pupil in a white dupatta shows up two hours late. No one says anything. A woman in a green-bordered white sari carrying a dung basket stands briefly by the line of children around Sita, listening.

The third grade returns to its place against the wall. Sita calls the first grade for their basic reading lesson and their first class of the day. A labourer stands silently listening for a few minutes, three feet from Sita. She teaches these little children very patiently, "a, aa, i, ii, u, uu" etc., taking the hand of each one and pointing his finger to each letter, saying the sound simultaneously. She says, "This letter is like a turtle. That's the one with a stick." Every time she reads a letter or a group of letters, all the children repeat after her. Only one of the pupils looks at his book as he repeats, the rest look straight ahead or just gaze about, blindly repeating.

12.10. Bhaiya Lal dismisses the fourth and calls the fifth for vocabulary. Their lesson is about Rahim, a Muslim who wrote about how God takes care of animals in the forest and drew parallels for human behaviour. At some points, there are couplets which Bhaiya Lal chants. The children chant it in return, then he explains the meaning. The third and fourth graders and a few "visitors" play and talk. There are four or five "visitors" today including one little girl carrying her baby brother. They just talk to whoever is not working with a teacher. They are sent to school to be out of their mother's way. The teachers tolerate this practice without difficulty.

The old Nain has come back and sits silently in the sun.

12.30. Sita is teaching the first graders one by one. Those not being taught stand before her idle, turning, twisting, and talking. Two are turned completely around. None except the child being taught is paying attention.

12.35. Sita dismisses the first grade and they sit down. The six second graders stand in front of her chair and begin reading their lesson aloud. It is about Ram and Sita. One second grader's tiny sister stands with the group. Sita makes sure they understand what they are reading by explaining each sentence.

12.40. Bhaiya Lal dismisses the fifth grade Hindi class and begins taking attendance. All the children are talking; some are standing. Bhaiya Lal shouts at one fourth grader, "Why are you standing? Sit!" All

the rest sit. "Who isn't here?" One boy answers, "Ashok." Bhaiya Lal: "Autaz Khan isn't here either ..." Only the few second graders are being taught. Two little children are cleaning their slate boards again. Two third graders are reading. All the other children are fooling around.

12.45. Sita dismisses the second grade. Bhaiya Lal tells the school, "Be quiet. Sit in order and leave quietly." None of the children listens very carefully and all leave for lunch without any semblance of order.

Classes begin at 2.00 when most of the children have come back. The fifth and fourth grades sit in the classroom doing art. Each pupil has to supply his own brush and water colour set. Those who cannot afford these things share with others. They are all making the same set geometrical design of black, white, and gray, copied from a book. Sita brings out a second blackboard with numbers written on it. She sets it against Babu's wall and the first grade clusters around, studying the figures and how to write them. The second and third grade are not doing anything.

Two men from Hasanpur village come to see Babu. Bhaiya Lal tells them that Babu has gone to the city, so they both come and sit on the veranda on chairs that Bhaiya Lal has two boys place by his table. Sita and Bhaiya Lal talk with the two men until nearly 3.00.

From 3.00 to 3.20 nothing is happening. Bhaiya Lal is reading a novel, Sita visits one of the housewives close by for a few minutes.

3.20. The first, second, and third grades line up against Babu's wall across the lane and recite additions and subtractions at the top of their lungs, led by one after another of their classmates. Two teenage villagers in country dress have been hanging around all afternoon. They listlessly watch the children's drill. Sita sits on the veranda in her chair facing the children. She is not paying very close attention. The flies are everywhere, enjoying the afternoon sun.

3.25. Bhaiya Lal announces he must go to the bazaar. He takes out his bicycle, wraps the several registers in a cloth, puts them on his carrier and leaves. Some of the older children who are reciting put away the table, chair and blackboards.

3.30. School ends. The children run off shouting. In less than 30 seconds only a few are left, putting away the mats and closing the window shutters. Sita leaves to catch her bus for the city at 5.00.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LILAULI VILLAGE SCHOOL

About 40 children, boys and girls, sat on the veranda of the Lilauli Junior Basic School. The master, a short dark man in his late 40's, heard the children recite group by group. He sat in a varnished wooden chair, dressed in dhoti, grey congress coat, white Gandhi cap, and khaki-yellow canvas shoes, unlaced. At the other end of the veranda, outside, a woman teacher in a cheap print sari sat on a similar wooden armchair, feet tucked underneath her, a three foot stick in her hand. These were the teachers of Lilauli: Bhaiya Lal Kayasth of Baburi, headmaster and teacher of grades 4-5, and Sita Devi Chauhan of Lucknow city, assistant teacher and teacher of grades 1-3.

The Teachers

Bhaiya Lal Kayasth and his large, well-to-do extended family in Baburi owned plenty of farm land and mango orchards; in addition, a number of the male members had city jobs. Though they claimed to be Kayasths, it was common knowledge in Baburi and Lilauli that Bhaiya Lal's family were actually of the Murao caste, vegetable growers of the Shudra *varna*, the lowest of the four great caste categories. They claimed to be separate, not belonging to any of the four. Due to wealth and numbers and because Baburi had been a Muslim-controlled village for centuries, no one tried to stop the Kayasth household from its Sanskritizing.¹

Because Lilauli knew that Bhaiya Lal was of a low caste, he tried to use his status as teacher and learned man to enhance his prestige. His first cousin, Mohan Lal, who lived in the same household, had also taught at Lilauli and was highly respected as the village's first teacher ever. Bhaiya Lal suffered unfavourable comparison with his deceased cousin.

Bhaiya Lal had done his elementary school degree in Hindi from a Vernacular School in 1935, completing the Middle Pass or seventh grade the following year in Urdu. Afterwards he farmed the family land for 13

years. The section he was allotted came to 50 bighas, a very large area. He grew wheat, chickpeas, sugarcane and potatoes and tended 15 bighas of mango orchard too. Then, in 1949 the new government took almost all his land for the airport so he had to get a job. He did not participate in the Congress struggle for independence. After two years of teachers' training, he began to teach, as a high school degree was not necessary then. His first job was in a village on the other side of the city, but he had worked in a number of towns and villages between 1952 and 1966, the year he was transferred to Lilauli. At one time, before Lilauli had a school, Bhaiya Lal was teaching in his home village, Baburi, and taught a number of the Lilauli children who walked there each day. By 1970, these children were young men in their late twenties.

Because he was only paid Rs. 147 a month after almost 20 years of teaching, Bhaiya Lal still farmed what land was left and also received a fair income from the mango orchard. Even though his teaching income was low, he planned to stick to the job until he retired in five years. The prestige of teaching attracted him and the idea that it was a social service. It seemed to me, though, that all his troubles were not outweighed by the meagre salary and the dubious status. I felt that Bhaiya Lal, too, was often ambivalent about his profession.

Bhaiya Lal used his education to advantage. He read the latest agricultural pamphlets and had a tube well installed with the help of a friend. Though one might have thought he would avoid growing vegetables—the occupation of the caste from which his family was trying to distance itself—Bhaiya Lal planned to specialise in okra and tomatoes. "The money is in the vegetables", he said.

Bhaiya Lal worked for the government, and his pay came from the city. At the same time, he was known as a villager, and he was a man of village sensibilities. Bhaiya Lal had two faces. His mood and company determined which face he presented. A gruff and rather grumpy man, he had a perpetually wounded air about him. One face was that of a man who read several short books a week, gleaned from a mobile library, and a newspaper almost daily. He could talk of Hong Kong and Macau or discuss the visit of the Prime Minister of Mauritius to India. (in comparison, many Lilauli adults did not realise that England and America were different countries). This side of Bhaiya Lal was idealistic. He made statements like:

"Man, man. Brother, brother".

"I only serve. I don't take part in politics though I'm interested. Any party that serves the people is good".

One day I brought an Australian student to the village. Bhaiya Lal said magnanimously, "Australia, India, and America are all the same. We are one."

Bhaiya Lal's other side was narrow and suspicious. He seemed to be an angry man, furious at his lot, striking out on all sides.

A fifth grade boy, good in his studies, had not come to school for several days. When he appeared, Bhaiya Lal struck him on the palms with a stick, saying angrily, "See! The examinations are next week and this boy doesn't come to class. Their parents don't care. They don't bother to send them. This is India. These are Indians. No good! Lazy! Here you have come all the way from America to study and they can't even come to school in their own village."

Such an attitude of inferiority was inherited from the British times along with the primary school organization itself. A few minutes later he was telling me, in an abrupt about-face, that nothing in America was any good. His "man, man, brother, brother" remarks had to be seen in the light of his constant insults to Harijan children. A few days after his statement on staying clear of politics, he appeared in sky-blue cap, symbol of a current political campaign. Bhaiya Lal was by no means a liar, nor did I ever feel he was deliberately trying to lead me astray. He was like Lerner's "Grocer of Balgat";² he was discontented, more aware of the world than his contemporaries, and yet he was unable to leave the village. Bhaiya Lal sometimes looked at the world beyond his own and tried to understand, tried to feel the things he had read. At other times, frustrated, he despaired of his position: uncertain caste, low-paid school teacher of little prestige, government servant with no future, plagued with an irresponsible assistant and an indifferent head office. His remarks must be seen in this light.

Sita, in contrast to Bhaiya Lal, was simple and straightforward. Despite her faults, the villagers did not get very angry at her. She was crude and sharp-tongued but never cruel. She often showed affection to the children though she beat them when they became unruly. Her duty was to teach the first three grades, make tea for visitors, and assist Bhaiya Lal with discipline.

Sita was born in a village in Faizabad District (about 80 miles from Lucknow) where her mother and family land remained. She had only a fifth grade education and still moved her lips when she read. She married into a landowning Thakur family in Allahabad District, then came to Lucknow with her husband, who was a havildar of the state guard at the Legislature. They had lived in the same *mohalla* (for low level government servants) in downtown Lucknow for 26 years. Her husband was married before and had three children. These were all married and settled elsewhere. Sita had had five children by him.

Sita got only Rs. 110 a month as an assistant teacher because she did not have a training certificate. Of that salary, Rs. 30 a month was spent on transportation to and from Lilauli. She took the bus from downtown Lucknow seven miles to the closest stop and still had to walk two more miles each way. If she accepted rides on someone's bicycle, it was held up as proof of her bad character. In the cooler times of the year, Sita had to rise at 5 a.m. to get her husband off to work and her children ready for school, cook breakfast and pack lunches, bathe, dress for work, lock the house and hurry to catch the bus. In the hot season, Sita had to get up at 4 a.m. to reach Lilauli by 6 o'clock. Said she, "It's a great bother to me." She continued:

Those villagers are a hot tempered lot. It's hard to stay there. Before me a girl whose husband had died was teaching there. She only lasted six months. One day some fifth graders beat her up. In those days, there were some older boys in the fifth, not little children like now. Lilauli is no good. I wish I didn't have to teach there. I tried to get a transfer. I've been there six years. I began teaching in Gandhi Block (very far from Lucknow). I taught there two years and lived there alone with Pratap (her youngest son), coming home only once or twice a month. After that, I was transferred to Lilauli.

I don't mind if I'm transferred. Well, there would be some good points and some bad ones. The bad one is that they can throw me down anywhere. If I get sent even farther in the countryside, that's what it is, "throwing me." I want to be sent to Kargawan or Papsara (both on the main road) otherwise I might leave the job completely. There's no chance to get a job in a municipal school. You have to fight and run about to be hired. Anyway, it's more difficult. The inspector may come any day and he does come often. Look, in Lilauli if he comes once a year, it's a lot. I took up this job because we needed

the income. That's all. Now we are getting four salaries (two children are working) and we don't lack money.

Though Sita had her faults, she was not unaware of the school's shortcomings. She commented ironically about how Bhaiya Lal would try to get the sub-deputy inspector to set easy questions for the hapless fifth graders at examination time. She noted that for some weeks before the exam, Bhaiya Lal spent all his time coaching the handful of fifth graders in math, leaving all the rest to their own devices. Attendance fell dramatically due to neglect. For his part, Bhaiya Lal cursed Sita yet again for not helping him by taking charge of the lower four grades.

The School

The school where Bhaiya Lal and Sita worked had three rooms plus a veranda. The veranda, made of a single layer of bricks, was roofed over but level with the ground and not separated from the lane in any way. The main classroom had two doors, one to the veranda and one to room A, and four paneless, wooden-shuttered windows. Water had leaked down in several places through the ceiling, staining the walls. A red floral design in a band decorated the walls, with maxims written in black underneath. In one corner, five birds painted in green, blue, yellow, and red sat above the flowered band. There were two cranes, a duck, a peacock and a parrot which Bhaiya Lal said represented the non-migratory birds. The old-fashioned maxims warned, "Telling lies is a sin. Respect your elders. Obey your mother, father, and guru. Be kind to those smaller than you. Be laborious and virtuous. Avoid bad company. Be in good company. Always tell the truth." The attendance sheet for teachers hung on the wall beside the class schedules which were dutifully made out by Bhaiya Lal

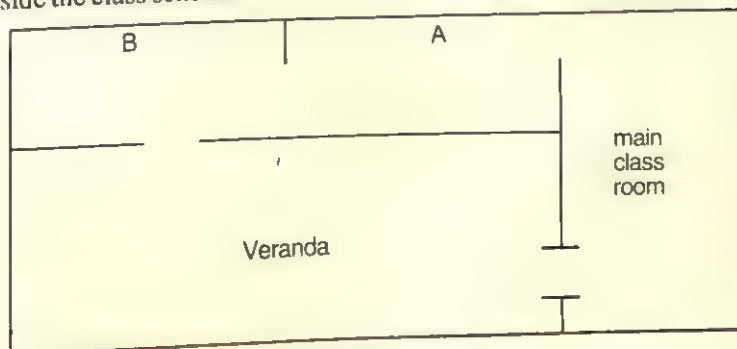


Figure 3. The Village School, Lilauli

and always hung in a conspicuous place. The purpose of the attendance sheet and class schedules seemed to be entirely symbolic as they never reflected in the slightest what actually went on in the school.

Room A was almost empty. It had one shuttered window and opened on to the other two rooms, but the atmosphere was dark, dusty and cold in winter. Like the other rooms, it had a brick floor. The room was being used as a storeroom, though once it had been a classroom as evidenced by the flowers and slogans around the wall. Both the main classroom and Room A had been decorated by Bhaiya Lal's cousin, mentioned previously, who had taught here for six years. Room A contained an open metal closet where two maps, a weather vane with a cock on top and some agricultural equipment were kept. In the corner there were some bamboo poles and farming tools. On the floor sat three dusty trunks containing books, registers and other materials. Sita told me with a chuckle that the key for the middle chest was lost and so no one could get at the registers and globe for teaching geography. The children studied outside on the veranda so none read the blue-painted admonitions: "Take a bath every day. Get up early in the morning. Do what your parents tell you. Wash your hands and face, then eat your food. Always tell the truth. Always serve your guru. Say Sita Ram." It was just as well that the Muslim children did not read the last.

The third room connected to Room A and the veranda. "Shubhagman," a Sanskrit welcome, was written in blue over the door in the veranda wall. Other than a metal cabinet, a bucket of water and brass pot for drinking, a kerosene stove, and an old wooden table with one drawer, Room B was empty too. The chairs and tables for the teachers were kept here at night along with the blackboards and the burlap mats the children sat on. Bhaiya Lal kept his bicycle in Room B and Sita, her blue aluminum lunch box.

By the side of the school lay a quarter-acre field that had been given to the school by Babu, the village big man, for use in practical farm training. The teachers never made use of it, so Babu planted potatoes and onions there in the spring and sugar cane for the monsoon season. In addition, as unofficial "patron" of the school, he and a close neighbour often tethered their bullock teams right in front of the school. The animals munched their fodder lazily with long lavender tongues. The fly population thrived mightily and made their flickering presence felt in the school.

As for toilet facilities, there was no place to go except in the bushes. The teachers were scornful of the government's failure to build them a proper latrine. In general, the school had not been repaired at all since its construction in 1961. During the rainy season the roof leaked badly. Rumours spread that the *pradhan* was going to have the school repaired, but nothing was done during my field work and no change had occurred by 1974 either. The children usually sat on the veranda because the interior rooms were so dark and damp. There were fears about the building's safety too. By 1982 the building was near collapse and the roof had been declared unsafe. The Government was supposed to repair it, but in the interim, the children placed their mats on the ground in Babu's neighbouring field, facing the new teacher who sat on the same old rickety chair.

Most of the children wore clothes that were thin, worn and faded. In the winter, many children had permanent sniffles. The predominant colour was faded white, but there were some green and brown shirts. Two little sisters had a unique combination of yellow checked blouses and khaki shorts, the boys all wore striped pajama pants like their elders. Most girls came in *shalwar-kamiz* (tunic and tight trousers). All the children were barefoot except one or two who left their rubber sandals at the edge of the veranda. Short hair was universal for the boys; a few rubbed shining oil into their hair, while five were totally shaved except for a tuft at the back. Some days the Muslim boys wore blue or red caps.

Throughout the year, except for the hottest months when they sat in the main classroom, classes were held on the veranda, all five grades together. All sat on the long, rectangular burlap mats that were heavily stained with various colours of ink. A dark black line left by nine years of hair oil ran around the veranda walls at the level of a sitting child's head. The children carried a minimum of equipment. Each child brought whatever he had in some sort of bag, from little khaki knapsacks to red cloth bags with two handles, commonly used by Indian men to bring vegetables from the bazaar on a bicycle. All had home-made pens made from a kind of cane called *rankul* used to write on black, wooden boards called *takhti*. The children used white ink compounded of chalk and water to make lines by dipping a string into the ink, then laboriously stretching the wet string across the *takhti*. Most had oilcloths to clean off the board for re-use. Other equipment included blue or black ink, small, yellow-covered notebooks, paperback readers for the various subjects

and the water colours and brushes of the fourth and fifth grades. The children went home at lunch so they did not have to bring anything to eat.

The pupils varied in age. Those who were much older than the others in their class usually dropped out, but still they ranged from six to 15. If Bhaiya Lal was more persuasive one year than the next, more pupils were enrolled and perhaps a few, who should have enrolled before, entered late. If parents taught a child at home, he might be started in a higher grade or be allowed to finish a grade in a few months. All had to stay in the fifth grade for a full year because there were so many subjects. Most villagers could not teach their children fifth grade Hindi or arithmetic. Actually, very few children studied at home and then joined a higher class. Bhaiya Lal said only seven or eight had done it.

The new first graders were sent off to school by their parents. Lilauli being a small village, all knew where the school was so parents did not need to bring the children in person. At school the fourth and fifth grades sat together as classes since their books and work were distinctive, but the first three grades were only vaguely separated. Often children from an extended family or related families sat together regardless of grade. For example, the six children from Ismail Khan's household nearly always sat together. The older children seldom, if ever, picked on younger ones. The concern of older pupils for younger brothers and sisters was constantly amazing to me, remembering the constant quarrels of an American childhood and the desire of older American children to distance themselves in public from "embarrassing" younger siblings.

For most of the year, school was held for six hours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with an hour between 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. for lunch. During April, May and July, the schedule ran from 6 a.m. to 11 because of the heat. Class was held six days a week with Sundays off. The single month of vacation was in June. Officially, school closed only for holidays generally celebrated in Uttar Pradesh, but in practice there were an enormous number of other holidays. Besides the major Hindu and Muslim holidays of Holi, Das-sehra, Divali, Id ul Fitr, and Muharram, there were days off for the observance of Kicheri, Shivratri, Sommoti Amawasya, Nag Panchami, Raksha Bandhan, Janam Ashtami, Id ul Zoha and a local traditional fair on the eighth day after Holi. The school closed on three secular occasions, as well, Republic Day, Independence Day, and Gandhi's Birthday. One or two more were granted in 1970, including the birthday of Guru Govind Singh, a Sikh prophet. No one in Lilauli knew the reason for this holiday

except a villager who taught primary school in Baburi. When Bhaiya Lal was sick for a week the children had an extended vacation because emergency (substitute) teachers did not exist, and Sita was so erratic in her attendance.

School routine varied little, but it was part of the Lilauli scene nevertheless. Since the veranda was open to the village, it was like a stage. Comments were exchanged between teachers and passing villagers, two wives might remark on how ragged so-and-so's boy looked, and punishments were witnessed by passing adults. In turn, the children eagerly observed all the events of the neighbourhood as they happened.

Enrolling in school was easy. Bhaiya Lal wrote down each child's name, date of birth, caste, and father's name and the child was a pupil at Lilauli Junior Basic School. Villagers rarely knew their birth dates so Bhaiya Lal recorded different even-numbered dates in February for first graders born in 1964. He admitted that he just filled in the dates. This mechanical recording of useless information occurred because city officials needed to complete "statistics." Later, such birth dates could be given legitimacy when various documents, even passports, were issued stating the date of birth arbitrarily assigned by the teacher.

In March 1970, there were 91 pupils enrolled, though 45 was the normal daily attendance. Boys outnumbered girls. The number of pupils finishing the fifth grade each year was between seven and ten. Of these perhaps half continued on to the sixth grade in Baburi or elsewhere. We shall return to the topic of enrolment and drop-outs later because there were many serious implications here for the future, for the accuracy of government statistics, and for the role of schools in grassroots change.

The teaching techniques used in Lilauli resembled those of the traditional *pathshala* or nineteenth century British common schools. Very little instruction was given to the children beyond interpretation of a text. A passage was read from the book by a pupil, then the class as a whole read the passage aloud again, and finally all were told to "learn" the passage. Various chantings and mumblings arose from that section of the veranda. Soon each pupil had to stand and read a piece of the assigned passage. The class was questioned as to meaning, both of certain words and of the passage as a whole. The process was repeated with the next passage. Such things as lesson plans were unknown in Lilauli. Neither teacher prepared anything before arriving at school. Bhaiya Lal had a schedule of classes to be followed, but usually taught Hindi and

arithmetic to the exclusion of everything else. Subjects were taught at random on any particular day, and methods never varied. Teaching aids or materials other than a blackboard were non-existent. It never occurred to the teachers to try to stimulate the children's interest; they taught purely and absolutely by the book. For writing practice, the children were told to copy a section of the book into a notebook or to write the alphabet or numbers on their *takhti*. When they completed this task, Bhaiya Lal ticked each notebook or *takhti* as a sign of recognition that they had obeyed. Usually he did not check to see if the work was correct. Only when the fifth graders did dictation did Bhaiya Lal go over their work and write corrected spellings and words written poorly on an opposite page for the pupil to copy. The final examination included dictation so the fifth grade had to have some prior experience. Art work was used merely to keep fifth graders busy while the younger pupils were being taught.

Arithmetic involved the largest amount of actual teaching. Bhaiya Lal did examples on the blackboard, then told the pupils what work to do or which problems to solve. He read a novel or chatted with a passer-by, while they worked. When the children finished they called out, "Masterji!" If the teacher was in a good mood, he explained the children's mistakes. If he were in a bad mood, and he often was, he punished errors with slaps or ear-twisting. No praise for good work was ever given. When Sita taught the smaller children, she used cajolery as well as threats and a thin stick. She sometimes gave instructions in hygiene and proper behaviour as well as the three R's.

Lilauli pupils completed one handicraft project good enough to present to the inspector on the May examination day. They did this at the beginning of the school year in July and August. Their handiwork was then carefully stored in the school and the children received no more instruction in crafts. All the primary schools in Uttar Pradesh were supposed to be conducted on the model of Gandhi's Basic Education with craft instruction and practice at its *core*. But lacking teachers trained in the Gandhian method and given rural dislike of any hint of "second rate" education, crafts-based education had proved unworkable from the start. Basic Education had become a ritual; from craft-based education it declined to a yearly presentation of the one item a child had made. By 1982 the whole pretense had finally been dropped.

Older teachers, like Bhaiya Lal and Sita, often had a low level of training. In 1970 teachers were told they must be high school graduates

with a teacher training certificate. Anyone without such a certificate was required to do a course to obtain one. The wheels of administration moved exceedingly slowly, and Sita, completely untrained, continued to teach the children of Lilauli. Given the level of their education and training it was not at all surprising that teachers resorted to traditional methods that reflected village socialization practices.

Guidance was left to parents. General exhortations to be clean and respectful to elders were the closest to guidance the teachers came. Pupil-teacher relations were almost totally a matter of discipline. Many villagers said that they did not mind if their children were beaten in school for poor work or for mistakes as this was an accepted method of correction. (See Babu's statement, p.126). One day Bhaiya Lal beat all the fifth graders on the palms with a split bamboo cane for not knowing the answer to a problem. He had asked one boy who gave the wrong answer. He was beaten. All the others stood at attention and gave the exact same answer in succession without even trying to take a wild guess. All were beaten but no one cried. Four women watched the beating quite unperturbed; one of them laughed at the sight.

On the other hand, parents felt that the teachers should not beat the children for disciplinary reasons—this was the prerogative of the parents. Hira Lal's story of Jamuna is an example. (See p.131)

The teachers were aware that educational authorities frowned on physical punishment. Sita noted that in educational science, beating children was considered bad, but, she said, if you didn't beat the kids in the countryside, they didn't make progress. She made a definite distinction between city and village children.

Her point was apt, if her methods dubious. Village discipline was different from urban discipline. The discipline prescribed by the U.P. Department of Education might or might not be effective, but it was never given a chance anyway. The school reflected the traditional discipline and authoritarian methods of village families. Children were seen but not heard. How far this was from the educational planners and thinkers in New Delhi with their desire to stimulate the child's intellectual curiosity! Small children were acculturated to school or made to adjust to school discipline by force or its threat. The standard formula was "do it or else." The "else" was liberally applied. A pupil ordered to sit or be quiet obeyed instantly, but stood up or began talking again in two minutes. Another

order was given or the pupil might be slapped in annoyance. Such children rarely cried; some only laughed. No rules were explained. No one was ever praised as a "good child" or "model pupil." Children were seen as more or less an undifferentiated group (except to be distinguished by caste or religion like their elders). Because the teachers themselves were villagers and untrained or nearly untrained, they did not perceive how discipline could be maintained in any other way. Arguing with children or explaining things to them was beyond the imagination of both teachers and parents. Discipline in Lilauli depended on the mood of the teacher or parent. So a small offence could be punished heavily if Bhaiya Lal were in a bad mood. A large offence might be ignored if he were in a good mood.

Children had to adjust to outside discipline as in all schools everywhere, but no explanations were ever offered in Lilauli. The teachers never explained why a pupil should come to school, why he should not bother others, or why he should follow particular directions. An incident illustrated this.

Riaz Khan, an important young village man, came to school pulling a weeping Fatima. She had been trying to skip school so he had beaten her. At first, Fatima hid behind the wall of the school, ashamed of her tears in front of all the children. Sita went and made Fatima sit down on the mat beside Zulfikar and Najma, her cousins. Taking her thin green stick, Sita made Fatima open her book, take out her pen, and so on, never actually striking the child. Zulfikar tried to help Fatima, but Sita told him to let her do it herself. Fatima's eyes were red, and she cried for a long time. No one—Bhaiya Lal, Sita, Riaz Khan—showed any sympathy. School was simply required. If a child did not go by herself, she would be forced to go. No explanation need be offered. The child could not argue or ask "But why...?" I never heard such arguments, so common in the West.

The school was really part of the village socialization process, reflecting the type of discipline and attitudes the villagers thought to be important. School helped strengthen traditional values despite government emphasis on bringing new ideas. For example, the Indian government, against considerable political opposition, had tried for years to help Harijans achieve a more equitable position in society. Harijans were financially encouraged to continue their education, and textbooks stressed the equality of all people. But village teachers ignored such innovations and persisted in old prejudices as these two examples showed:

Bhaiya Lal twisted the ears of a Kori girl in the 5th grade. Still she did not understand the maths problem. When he sat down again I asked him quietly about her, the only Harijan in the 5th grade. Said Bhaiya Lal loudly, She's just one of these Untouchables. Sometimes she doesn't come to school for a month. She's lazy and was lazy in her last life."

Again, when the same girl was misbehaving, Bhaiya Lal shouted, "Ha! You're going to turn out a bhangi!" (Bhangis are the lowest of Untouchables, removers of faeces)

Sita often felt the villagers' disrespect for her as a working woman. To get her own back she emphasized her high caste position to all and sundry. I once inadvertently helped her to make the point:

One day, after eating lunch with the teachers, I drank from Sita's brass water pot at the edge of the veranda. In front of all the children she refused to drink then, going waterless on a very hot day, though I had not touched the pot with my lips. I had "polluted" her pot. (When I visited her home she never behaved like this).

Curiosity in children was not appreciated among most sectors of society. Traditional learning patterns emphasized taking what was handed down. Traditional students were humble receivers of knowledge and moral example from guru or maulvi. They were not avid questioners or seekers in the Enlightenment-inspired Western mode. These traditions may have been reflected in the village socialisation process by the suppression or disregard of curiosity. Lilauli children who asked questions of their elders were invariably shushed and told to run off and play. If they clustered around a "happening" they were shooed away. The teachers treated pupils exactly the same way. If a pupil asked a question of the teacher, he was told to be quiet. Bhaiya Lal, shown some completed work by a proud pupil, would wave the child away without a glance.

An old Muslim, peddling ready-made children's clothes passed by the school. Sita called to him and had him spread some of his tiny shirts and blouses on her table on the veranda. Twenty pupils ran and gathered around the table. Sita remarked, "You're selling them so expensively."

He picked up his wares and left without a word.

"Hey children!" she shouted, "what are you all gathered around here for?" All scattered to their places.

As teacher she could indulge her curiosity about something totally unconnected with the school, but the children were not allowed to do the same. This happened time and time again.

Both Hindu and Muslim tradition valued memorization as the chief method of formal learning. Modern Brahmin names in Hindi revealed ancestors who had memorized two, three or four of the sacred Vedas (Dwivedi, Trivedi, Chaturvedi). The Muslim title *hafiz* denotes that a person knows the entire Koran by heart. Not only was memorization important in practice, but many people believed that the children did not learn unless they memorized. The modern educationists in Central and State Government offices may have disagreed, but Indian education, particularly at the village level, remained largely a process of memorization. The disciple's ritual of religious texts had become a chant of arithmetic, geography or Hindi, but still a ritual very much within the traditional body of teaching/learning technique.

Attendance was usually taken a few hours after school opened to allow for late arrivals. In this way, Bhaiya Lal "stretched" attendance figures to show a better record to the Inspector. Late children were merely told to come at 10 o'clock if anything was said at all. Bhaiya Lal's major influence in Lilauli was said to be in persuading parents to have their children enrolled. Once a year he asked all the pupils if they had any brothers and sisters of school age. Parents might allow their children's names to be written down, but they did not pay much attention to their children's attendance. Only a few, those of higher socio-economic status, would punish a child for being absent. Even the most conscientious thought nothing of sending a child to visit relatives for a week. Poorer families required children to work—either guarding animals or taking care of younger siblings. Many children who had been enrolled never set foot in the school because family came first. If many children were missing on a particular day, Bhaiya Lal might send a "round up squad" of bigger boys to bring in all school children they found playing and roaming about the village. After 30 minutes they would return with four or five sheepish truants and a report of who was sick or visiting relatives. The truants were beaten and sent to their places. They usually had no school equipment so they disrupted things for the rest of the day.

The vocabulary used in school was significant. Everyone was supposed to speak standard Hindustani. Bhaiya Lal did so except when he got angry and lapsed into local dialect. Sita generally spoke dialect. Both teachers always used the familiar form when addressing the children. The children never spoke to the teachers in a conversational way. Both their formal, study-oriented answers or their shy, personal replies were limited to a few words. Avadhi dialect was the rule for requests or complaints. The children talked to one another only in dialect. Little attempt was made to make them speak standard Hindustani mainly because they could not.

The children addressed Bhaiya Lal as "Munshi-ji," which can be used for clerks, or "Master-ji," derived from English and also having the connotation of a paid employee. A few villagers talked of Bhaiya Lal as "Kayasth-ji", referring to his caste name, which, as we have seen, was not his real one. No one called him "Guru-ji." He was not a guru. No one touched his feet. People said, "We respect him because he teaches our children," but in fact, they did not respect Bhaiya Lal very much. Their frequent use of "Master-ji" for him and for all government primary school teachers showed this (as well as the rude comments made about him in his absence).

Sita was universally addressed and referred to as "Bahin-ji" (sister), a respectful but familiar form. People infrequently used "Masterni", the feminine of "Master." There being no tradition of women teachers in Indian villages, Sita commanded little respect and was regarded more or less as a "fallen woman." Villagers differed about this only in degree. Any woman who came alone to a village or travelled alone to a destination other than a relative's house *had* to be of bad character. Sita's behaviour and lack of attention to her work caused some villagers to address her rather sharply at times.

Bhaiya Lal had a facility for language. He could impress villagers and strangers with his proficiency in high-flown official Hindi and his vocabulary of big words that the villagers did not understand. He could speak fluent Urdu on occasion and quote the famous poet, Ghalib. He used standard Hindustani with urban visitors and the local dialect with villagers. Bhaiya Lal's ability to use these four dialects of north Indian speech was not amazing in the context of Lucknow, but he was the only person in Lilauli who could do it. The villagers realised he was an educated man. On the other hand, Sita could barely speak standard

Hindustani. Village dialect kept slipping into her grammar and pronunciation. She did not speak official Hindi or Urdu at all. Her language was very earthy, even foul at times. Villagers were not scandalised, but they felt it was not proper in a teacher, especially a woman teacher. Her bad language merely confirmed the "truth" that she was a fallen woman. Bhaiya Lal spoke roughly or used caste-based insults to the children but never dirty language. Language can be seen as one guide to the social structure of the school. It separated Bhaiya Lal from Sita as much as sex, training or official position. Language gave Bhaiya Lal added status to make up for lower caste.

The social structure of the Lilauli school was not complex. Bhaiya Lal, headmaster and teacher, was the dominant figure because of his education, personality and sex. Sita was subordinate—the assistant teacher. She resented this because she was of a higher caste and because she was not a meek woman. Her neglect of duty, foul language, lack of ability in standard Hindustani, cheroot smoking and "fallen woman" status fixed her in a lower position in the eyes of the villagers. The children were an undifferentiated group. Neither teachers nor villagers treated fifth graders any differently from first graders because of their higher grade. As opposed to grade, age did make a difference in treatment. Older children were treated more harshly and given stiffer punishments. The youngest children were hardly ever touched. Differentiation by size, relative age or caste were the only distinctions ever made. Children were never distinguished by teachers in terms of their school work or intelligence. No bright child was ever pointed out to me, nor did the teachers ever mention any child's capacity or lack thereof. In 1982, the current Lilauli teacher reflected this pattern exactly. When I asked, he said in rather surprised tones that he had not noted any especially bright children. I felt the idea of looking had never occurred to him.

Men in the top echelon of the village social structure entered and sat in the school with the teachers at will. They ordered a child or several children to get up and perform short tasks outside the school. Other men and youths over 16 could sit or stand on the veranda, but Bhaiya Lal seldom talked to them. If such lesser visitors began to talk among themselves, they might be asked to leave if the discussion were too loud. Bhaiya Lal insisted on his status as teacher as much as possible. He could not refuse normal requests from Babu or other important villagers, but for others it was a different story.

Women might greet Sita, and one or two talked to Bhaiya Lal, but they never stepped onto the veranda. If they wanted to observe the classes, they stood in the middle of the lane. Many covered their faces with their saris when they passed. Sita went to two or three houses to talk with her acquaintances—the wives of Babu, Hira Lal and Ram Mohan, all important or well-to-do Ahir farmers.

Harijan men wishing to talk to Bhaiya Lal or observe the school, squatted in the lane or at the very edge of the veranda. None would dare to sit in a chair before the teacher, a government employee. Though many villagers said in the interviews that they listened to what Bhaiya Lal had to say, only Harijans came to ask advice. They did not feel able to ask knowledgeable upper-class villagers. Bhaiya Lal, as an outsider, yet a villager from the same area, was a good source of information for them. People consulted him about patent medicines, doctors and various disputes. No one dreamed of consulting Sita.

Lakshmi, a young village woman in her twenties, began to work in a pharmaceutical factory on the outskirts of the city after both her father and her husband died. It was three miles from Lilauli—a long walk in the hot sun or rain. Lakshmi began accepting rides on villagers' bicycle carriers. Because of her outside job and because of these rides, she was labelled a prostitute. Ugly rumours floated around the village. Bhaiya Lal was her only confidant. She came, sat on a chair and had long talks with him. The teacher's special status allowed him this tie without censure.

Thus, in a way, both teachers had special status. Sita's status was low, but she was a Thakur. She emphasised her high caste in every way she could, never letting people in Lilauli forget that she was of higher caste than all of them. Her high caste and status as "teacher" gained her entry to the best Ahir houses, the homes of women far better off economically than she. Bhaiya Lal had a high status vis-a-vis the lowest caste and low-status villagers that came to him for advice. He was recognised by everyone in Lilauli as an educated man and teacher and given a certain leeway because of this. His sharp tongue and abrupt manner were forgiven because he was well-read and a teacher. However, most villagers did not particularly respect him and certainly would not ask his opinion on important village issues.

If the teachers did not enjoy a high status in Lilauli, neither was their job usually very strenuous. There were few fixed routines in the school.

The day began with a prayer and the national anthem every morning. This was obviously a ritual for children only, since the teachers stood by and never participated. After opening exercises, if a pupil wished to ask the teacher something or was asked a question by the teacher, he had to stand. There was no play period or recess, except for lunch. These small children were expected to sit quietly from 10 to 1 and from 2 to 4. They did not. A small ritual evolved. Children asked in a formal manner to be excused to defecate. Unless the child had been especially troublesome, his request was granted. The lucky one would race off, not to return for half an hour or more. A little "club" of five or six boys could always be found squatting on the canal bank, talking animatedly. The girls may have had such a "club" also, but it was out of sight. The teachers never reprimanded such absentees. Perhaps they were glad to have a temporary reduction in numbers and an accompanying reduction in misbehaviour.

Bhaiya Lal periodically shouted at the pupils to be quiet. Sometimes he would shout, "Shut up!" sometimes just an inchoate "Eyy!" The children knew he was getting angry and subsided for a few minutes but soon began talking again. Only personal threats were taken a little seriously. Bhaiya Lal was a formidable shouter. Sometimes the bullocks, chewing their cuds in the lane, jumped to their feet in alarm. There was no "staying after school," as the teachers were eager to be off and had no work to keep them behind. There was no other punishment except beatings, scolding, or being made to sit apart.

At the end of the day, certain older boys put away the teachers' chairs, the desk and the mats. The boys took Bhaiya Lal's bicycle out of the store room after closing the windows, and Bhaiya Lal locked the doors. The children ran off with no closing ritual. The last day of the school year was the same as any other day. Nothing was said; there were no special activities.

Only during the month of April was there a change in the unhurried pace of school life. Bhaiya Lal worked hard every day preparing the fifth grade for its examination. On the last day before the examination he arrived at school over three hours late. He had been to the examination centre at Baburi. The children had been waiting, playing and talking all the while. Bhaiya Lal told the fifth grade about the examination format. He wrote some instructions to that effect on the blackboard, then he told them to study. At the end of the day, the four lower grades were dismissed. The nine fifth graders collected all their things from inside the school.

They took out their drawings and the mats each child had made in the weaving class, done to comply with Basic Education requirements. The next day they would take the first examination in their lives. For many, it would be the last.

The day of the examination was 6 May 1970. At 7.15 a.m., the yard of the Baburi Senior Basic School (the Local Centre described earlier) was full of pupils sitting or standing in groups. Few tried to do any last-minute cramming; nobody seemed very nervous. It was, after all, an entirely new experience whose importance not many realized. The teachers from the various villages in the Baburi Circle filled out 15-by-30 inch forms for their classes, one form per village. They recorded the names, father's name, caste and age, of each pupil in the fifth grade. Later the marks in each subject would be entered on these forms. When finished, the teachers all sat together on one charpai and a number of broken chairs. Bhaiya Lal and one other teacher talked; the younger ones all remained quiet. Bhaiya Lal assumed an experienced air, thoroughly familiar with all these proceedings. He also expected to be heard on each topic of discussion. The topics were U.P. politics and a recent robbery. Har Govind, son of Lilauli's *pradhan* and a teacher in the Baburi Primary School, wore Western dress. The rest all were in Indian clothes. Mukhtar Alam, the Baburi Principal, whacked a boy sitting in the examination room. Bhaiya Lal chided him:

"Do you have to beat them in the exam too?"

Mukhtar Alam, "Beat them all the time or they'll play gulli-danda in the bazaar".

My field notes record something of the atmosphere of this unusual occasion.

The one Physical Education teacher for the various Senior Basic Schools in the Block arrives and immediately begins to maintain order and to arrange the seating of the children. All pupils line up by schools and squat in ranks facing the Physical Education teacher and two of the older primary school teachers. There are 116 pupils in all. The most from one school are the 19 from Baburi. All have brought their supplies—paper, pen, ink, paints and lunch in their worn cloth bags. A teacher begins calling the names of the pupils and their villages. The children called are from alternating villages. They go inside and sit on the burlap matting in the order called. Several

teachers oversee this process. They are trying to separate children from the same school to prevent cheating. Several of the Lilauli children are sitting across from one another rather than behind one another. The rows are only two feet apart. A large crowd of sixth graders has been watching this whole affair boisterously, breaking into loud laughter at the sight of an exceptionally fat or otherwise noteworthy pupil.

The 116 children fit into three classrooms. A proctor's desk is set up at the entrance to each room. Now all the teachers crowd into the rooms. A few children are switched from one seat to another. Then the teachers assist their own pupils to fill out some small forms and give them last-minute instructions and encouragements.

Shortly after the children are settled there is a short conference of teachers in an empty room at the end of the school. They decide what art paper to set. The Sub-Deputy Inspector, Trivedi, will set the papers in maths, Hindi and social science. The others, art, penmanship and science, are set by the teachers themselves.

All teachers are asked to leave the rooms except for the invigilators. Bhaiya Lal is outside reading the newspaper. The children must choose to draw a mango, a guava or a sari border. The teachers sit outside. There is an occasional shout at a pupil to stop talking with his neighbour. The sixth graders have been shooed off the school grounds.

The news arrives that the SDI is not feeling well and will come late. All the examinations which do not require his presence are being given first.

Next are the dictation and penmanship examinations. The dictation is read loudly and repeated very, very slowly by the teacher in the central room. The teachers acting as proctors in the side rooms repeat his words, though Har Govind failed to do so several times and the children in the back were having difficulties in hearing. There is large-scale copying from one another's papers. In one room a teacher stands behind the door, hidden from the outside, and openly gives help to two of his pupils in view of the proctor and the roomful of pupils. Bhaiya Lal, who lives in Baburi, sends a low-caste labourer who is working at a nearby threshing floor to tell his wife to prepare a special lunch for the Sub-Deputy Inspector.

The next examination is composition. More copying. The teachers scold the children for talking but ignore their leanings and cranings.

The lack of discipline and strict rules about cheating must be a result of and also contribute to the mass cheating that goes on in examinations across northern India. In many universities, since the late 1960s, standards have been so eroded by cheating as to become non-existent. By the 1980s even the villagers were fully aware of the practice. The examination system, like the school system itself to a large extent, was there in form but not in content. Nothing was working in the way the policy makers and educationists in Delhi and Lucknow intended.

The Hindi examination begins soon after Trivedi's arrival at 10.20. He supervises the setting of the examination paper then returns to the "staff room" at the end of the school which has a table and chair especially set up for him. The teachers sit on rugs and mats spread on the floor. He assigns each primary school headmaster to correct the examinations for one subject. The SDI says that 50 per cent is needed to pass and no grace marks will be given. The teachers chase off all superfluous children hanging about the school grounds. Some of them had been loitering near the doors to the testing rooms or pressing their faces up to the wire-mesh windows in the back in an obvious attempt to aid the examinees.

At 12.30, all the children emerged for lunch. Most had brought a lunch, a few parents came to the school bringing a special lunch. No one came from Lilauli, though packing a lunch for a child meant that the day would be noted in most houses.

The shade under the largest neem tree in the school yard shrank steadily. A group of teachers sat in the 110 degree shade. It was cooler in the dark rooms with brick floors where the pupils were writing, but taking examinations in such weather was still difficult.

At 1.40 directions are given and the children begin their math examination. The teachers relax on the clean mats in the end room or sit correcting the morning's papers. Two brass trays of food have been brought from Bhaiya Lal's house, one for him and one for Trivedi. Bhaiya Lal acts the host, offering the food to Trivedi rather ceremoniously.

At 2 o'clock, I am asked to leave, as all people unconnected with the examination must be away from the school building during the math examination. The pupils are all quiet, doing the problems.

The examinations continue until after 5.30.

The evening of the day after the examinations I spoke to Mukhtar Alam who was lying on a charpai in front of his school. All was peaceful. A few birds chattered in the trees; men working in the threshing floor by the end of the school clucked intermittently to their bullocks. He told me that the results had already been given to the teachers along with certificates for those who passed. Most of the children passed. This time out of 116 pupils, 110 passed and six failed. He felt that to be a normal percentage as, after all, it was only the fifth grade. But out of the six who failed, two were from Lilauli. One boy failed for the second time. Only nine children in 116 were from Lilauli. Bhaiya Lal's troubles with Sita had been translated into this poor showing. The villagers would not protest. Seven out of nine was "not bad", and everyone knew that the "Bahin-ji" did not help Bhaiya Lal. Of the seven successful children, three were girls who would not continue. The four boys planned to go on but it was not sure if all actually would.

Because all holidays and festivals were celebrated at home, there was not a change in school life at those times. The teachers did not feel it necessary to teach the children about the meaning of holidays, as for example, American teachers do about Thanksgiving. Each festival except one was marked only by a day off. The school's one annual ritual occurred on 26 January, Republic Day.

Sita and Bhaiya Lal arrived at school early to find a number of spectators already present, mostly young men and teenage boys. The children, all in fresh, clean clothes, looked quite different from their usual dusty, mischievous selves. The teachers had them form a double line. Accompanied by Sita, the pupils then marched through the village behind the national flag mounted on a bamboo pole. The flag was carried by the tallest pupil, a 15-year-old Harijan boy from nearby Matarpur hamlet. (It was interesting that the selection was not made by caste on a national holiday. A Harijan could not have hoped to have a similar honour on any traditional holiday). The lines were ragged at times as the procession wound through every *mohalla* in the village. The children shouted "Victory to Mother India," "Long Live Mahatma Gandhi" and "Long Live Jawaharlal Nehru" with plenty of gusto.

While the procession was out of sight among the houses, Babu, Chandra, the *pradhan* and 15 "lesser" villagers arrived. There was talk of having *shramdan* (a communal work party) to clean up parts of the village which had grown filthy of late. Bhaiya Lal, who had not gone with the children, remarked sarcastically: "Man, it's going to be a regular Switzerland around here!"

The pupils returned to the school and formed a hollow square before the veranda. The small crowd of waiting youths gathered behind the children. Riaz and Fayyaz set the flagpole into the ground within the square and ran up the flag, ingeniously sewn into a bag and filled with marigold and rose petals. Bhaiya Lal, Sita, Babu, Chandra, the *pradhan* and three of the biggest fifth graders faced the children from the veranda. Bhaiya Lal ordered the pupils to attention, and all stood quietly. Riaz Khan and his brother Fayyaz stood (off the veranda) at the side of the square of children. Kali Das, the *pradhan*, dressed in his best white dhoti-kurta and homespun shawl, pulled the rope to unfurl the flag. The petals showered to the ground as the tricolour fluttered open. The three boys on the veranda began the national anthem. The rest of the children joined them, but no adults did. Babu decided that he and the teachers would each contribute Rs. 5 and sent 20-year-old Om Prakash to Baburi by bicycle to buy sweets for all the children. Sita was not pleased about her "contribution." The burlap mats were spread over the whole veranda and four chairs placed at one end. The children sat on the mats, the young men stood off the veranda, and Babu, Kali Das, Bhaiya Lal and Sita sat in the chairs as Bhaiya Lal resonantly read the difficult official Hindi of the mimeographed speeches of the U.P. Minister of Education and Director of Education, sent a day early from the Local Centre at Baburi to Lilauli. It was very doubtful if many of those present understood them.

The disorganization and disorder in Lilauli's school—so far from what the government of India planners envisage—are nonetheless very real. "Soft state" conditions have prevented any action being taken. The village has absorbed the school—the school has not been able to change the village. The child who attended his or her first day of school found nothing new; she or he did not enter a new world. This environment rarely produces a child who can cope with the more stringent requirements of the urban world.

The teachers, especially Bhaiya Lal, were well aware that their teaching and the school environment did not come near the ideal or even

the norm expected by the city bureaucracy. But they felt that the government or District Board cared little for them, and it seemed to me they were right. There was no encouragement for teachers to study further. Even to take an examination, a teacher had to apply for permission from the government. If a primary school teacher should obtain a higher degree there was no salary raise, no change at all except that there might be a chance to go to teach in a Senior Basic School (Grades 6-8). He would have to try hard for this. Bhaiya Lal had applied three or four years before for a transfer to a Senior Basic School. No action had been taken.

No action had been taken over Bhaiya Lal's problem with Sita either. She was his biggest trial in life. 1970 was the year before the decennial census. There were a number of meetings to attend in the city. Village school teachers had to make maps of their village and number all dwellings for the census in 1971. No carbon paper was supplied; the teachers had to copy their detailed maps three times. Bhaiya Lal did this work conscientiously every morning for three months. He received an extra Rs. 20 for the whole job. Sita did not help him. What is more, she hardly bothered to teach the children. Many villagers said she was spoiling the education of the younger grades. Her neglect created future headaches for Bhaiya Lal as well as a severe discipline problem. Sita was absent without leave for most of February. She had had a rickshaw accident on 30 March while on unsanctioned leave and was incapacitated until July. From July to November she made only sporadic appearances at the school. Bhaiya Lal alternated between despair and rage. I visited the Lilauli school in October, after over three months' absence. Bhaiya Lal, feet up on the desk, was reading a novel. A few children were working but there was the usual noise and disorder.

"Namaste, Bhaiya Lal-ji".

"I don't speak to those foreigners who go off and never remember those they left behind".

He was in good gruff form. I convinced him I had been busy. Then he opened up.

"Oh, don't even ask how things are. I'm sick of of this. I've reported her (Sita) every month but nothing has been done. I don't know why. But they can't tell me they never got my reports. I sent duplicates to Baburi as well, so that the complaints are in two places. She hardly

comes three or four times in a month—just when she feels like it—once this month, twice that month. This month she has yet to come once. One thing is that there's a new Sub-Deputy Inspector, a Bengali. He hasn't come since July, but when he does I'll tell him good. Nobody is teaching these little ones. I've applied to be transferred to Baburi. It looks as if it might go through. They'll get a new teacher here. Hopefully two new teachers".

In addition to her absences, Sita also made Bhaiya Lal's life miserable when she came. Though he pointed out her faults and criticized her behaviour to her face, she could and often did taunt him about his caste. There was another way of infuriating the childless Bhaiya Lal.

Chandra sat in the school. He chided Sita for not coming.

Bhaiya Lal: "And why didn't you come yesterday?"

Sita: "I didn't feel like it." She laughed gaily.

Chandra: "You should follow Munshi-ji's example. He comes every day. He knows what work is."

Sita: "What does he know? Ask him how many children he's had."

There are a number of points to note about the Lilauli teachers. First, unlike traditional gurus, teachers took the job as a way to earn a living or at least extra money, as in the case of the Lilauli teachers. Primary school teaching was not an honoured profession. Villagers sometimes made this depressingly obvious:

Bhaiya Lal and Bandagi, 25, an 8th grade pass, are having an argument. Bandagi is doing manual work on the Railway though he had hoped to be a clerk.

Bandagi: "School is useless. Everything depends on Fate as to whether children will succeed or not."

Bhaiya Lal disputes this, vaunting the value of education.

Bandagi: "You are ruining these kids."

This naturally stings.

Bhaiya Lal replies: "You'll see in a few years where these children will be. They'll be better off than you!"

Bandagi: "Prove it"

And Bhaiya Lal cannot.

Second, teachers can no longer maintain their prestige on the basis of their education or higher caste. Higher-caste Indians, especially Brahmin and Vaisya, look for jobs in industry, government and the higher-paid professions if they do not have their own business. Primary school teaching, particularly, is becoming more of a lower-caste preserve because without connections and the chance to become fluent in English, educated lower-caste men are excluded from the more desirable jobs. Lower caste women cannot afford to stay home idle as often as upper-caste women, nor do they have as easy access to jobs in banks, offices or prestigious private schools. Having access to education earlier and having been more alert to its potential, the upper castes are now able to shun rural primary school teaching, leaving it increasingly to the lower castes eager to break out of hard labour. Therefore, the teachers' social prestige has tended to fall. In any case, a high-caste person in a low-status job gets only marginally better respect. With the expansion of educational opportunities in modern India, rural primary school teachers, who are seen traditionally as near losers in the race for jobs, are continually being pushed down in status. In 1970, their salaries were low, they went on strike at times (a demeaning act for a supposed "guru") and even by that year, many Lilauli youths had gone further in school than Bhaiya Lal or Sita ever did. There was little reward in being a primary teacher either socially or economically.

If the teachers were not rewarded with great honour or prestige by Lilauli, at least they were not under stress to turn in an outstanding performance. They had merely to live up to village standards. They had to be present in the school and get the majority of the fifth grade through the examination. The villagers saw greater social confidence and ability to communicate as the major benefits of education. Whether the children actually acquired these assets in school is irrelevant here. (My opinion is that changing society and patterns of socialisation *outside* the village were largely responsible for increased confidence). Because Sita did not come to school regularly, and Bhaiya Lal warned leading villagers that the smaller children were not being prepared, most knowledgeable people in Lilauli did not express satisfaction with Sita as a teacher. Bhaiya Lal came to work regularly, most fifth graders passed the examination and the Master-ji fitted the image of a government teacher. Therefore, the

villagers felt their children were being "socialised" correctly, and they were satisfied with Bhaiya Lal's performance.

Third, teachers had few possibilities for advancement. Their hopes were to get a pension on retiring and to avoid transfer to a school very far from home. Many tried to earn money on the side to supplement their meagre pay. Sita and Bhaiya Lal were lucky in this respect. They did not have to do this. There was no encouragement from either government or village to maintain a high standard of teaching.

Fourth, traditional discipline continued from home to school without interruption. The behaviour of the children and their relations with the teacher reflected the behaviour of the villagers and their relations with authority. There were no enforced rules. Behaviour guides for the pupils written on the school room wall had no effect. Children obeyed the teachers because they had power. The authoritarian pattern was prevalent in adult life throughout Indian society. Food was adulterated, speed limits ignored, taxes unpaid, waiting queues bypassed—only those without sufficient connection to authority were blocked. The laws written on the walls of Indian society were only for those who did not have the money or power to ignore them. Just as the children became accustomed to thinking in terms of what they could get away with, so in adult life they had little sense of civic or social responsibility. Thinking of others except in terms of charity from a higher to lower status remained undeveloped. The school reinforced this pattern rather than breaking it.

Fifth, the school was an organization in a "soft state". The government goals, if perceived, were not urgent. Teachers were not reprimanded, questioned or checked. Between January and November 1970 there was no inspection at Lilauli. Nothing was done about Sita, absent almost 75 per cent of the time. No one spoke to Bhaiya Lal for reading novels in class or for holding long conversations with passers-by. The written complaints about Sita were ignored. Bhaiya Lal was scrupulous in one thing only. The lesson plans hung from the wall in the main classroom, untouched but ever-ready for inspection. The fictitious enrolment and attendance figures plus the teachers' sign-in book were kept up to date and ready for inspection. Bhaiya Lal took no chance with the records.

Sixth, teachers resolved any open conflict with villagers by taking refuge in their status as "mere" government servants. They could not be

held responsible for the actions of men in Lucknow. If anyone complained that Bhaiya Lal interfered in village life by demanding that children be sent to school, he could say that he was only doing what "they" had ordered. In any explicit conflict over educational goals, the teachers would side with the villagers, whom they had to face daily and with whom they were culturally one. They ignored subjects like agriculture, which they felt to be less important from a village standpoint and harmful to their fragile prestige.

Finally, there were two kinds of teacher-village relationships. One was between the teachers and educated, landowning, or politically prominent Ahirs and Ismail Khan's family. The teachers were more or less of lower status than these families. Men of these families could openly contradict Bhaiya Lal or order pupils out of classes without his permission. Babu, the big man, could decide that each teacher would "donate" Rs. 5 for sweets on Republic Day. Babu told Sita she ought to go to a District Board meeting about her training. The other relationship, between the teachers and poor Muslims, Harijans and poor, illiterate Ahirs was different. For these people, Bhaiya Lal was an educated man in touch with the outside world. They respected him because of this, even though he did not fulfil the traditional ideal of a teacher and was known to be a low-paid government servant.

Education in Lilauli was ideal neither for the government (if they had known), nor for the villagers. Because of Sita's non-attendance the Lilauli school might have been slightly below average, but visits in 1974 and 1982, after Sita and Bhaiya Lal were long gone, revealed that the pattern remained the same. The questions must be asked, what did the villagers think of all this? What did they want from education and from a school? How did the school fit into the village and its life?

INTRODUCING THE MAKTAB: ANOTHER DAY

At 7.15 the morning sky is overcast and there is a cool breeze blowing. Kasim Ali is sitting on a small piece of matting among a crowd of children. He is 66 years old, with a thick beard. Kasim is stout and healthy looking, about 5 feet, 5 inches tall. He has false teeth that are apt to pop out while he talks, startling the unwary.

Not all the children have arrived, nor has Muhammad Anwar. School "began" at 7.00.

7.30. Before starting their studies each day, the children stand in a U-formation in the centre of the courtyard, girls on one side and boys on the other. Several of the biggest boys form the bottom of the U. For ten minutes they chant small poems, Islamic slogans, bits of the Islamic litany, "Long live the Islamic Religion" and the immemorial "La illaha illallahu. Muhammadu rasul I' Allah." (There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet). They shout it with great gusto. Kasim has them do it again.

7.55. Muhammad Anwar arrives on his bicycle. He is a stout man of 31, 5 feet, 3 inches tall, dark and serious. Like Kasim he wears traditional clothes.

Both teachers sit cross-legged on the floor while they teach as there are no chairs or tables. First, though, Anwar carries his bicycle into the storeroom so as not to touch the mosque with its dirty tires. He says "Salaam Aleikum" to Kasim and enters the inner room.

8.15. Kasim gives the fourth and fifth some arithmetic problems. He then carves points on the wooden pens of some small pupils and teaches each first grader a few syllables of Urdu, marking each child's progress with a pencil in the child's book. The process is this: the pupil pushes his book in front of the teacher, Kasim repeats three or four syllables written on the page and marks the place he stopped with a pencil. The child goes off and memorizes the syllables out loud. Being first graders their attention span is limited; in a few minutes they begin talking or standing. Then suddenly they recall their duty and shout out the syllables again. It is quite a din. Fifteen minutes later Kasim corrects the arithmetic problems, telling the children to write the syllables on their slateboards.

The first grade is called the Alif class. They are tiny tots. An Alif girl standing nearby has a ring in her nose, three yellow bangles on each wrist and a green ring on one finger. Her palms and nails are rubbed with henna. Most girls have henna on their fingernails and toenails. Today is the Hindu holiday of Tij when Hindu girls put henna on their palms and nails. Village Muslims are in constant contact with Hindus. The two groups naturally influence each other.

Kasim takes pride in pointing out what "we have in this school, but is not found in any other school."

"In what other school do you find the teachers making pens for the children? They don't know how. But I'll tell you that these store pens the government school children use now are no good. Until you use one of these cane pens on a slateboard, you can't learn to write properly. See this knife? It's been with me 20 years. It's a No. 6 knife. The company is long since gone out of business."

8.40. Teaches Urdu to the Alif class, a letter or a word at a time. A little girl recites very well. Kasim pays no attention. He talks and directs other children, teaching one a letter here, whittling a pen there, asking and answering questions. He tells the girl, "Don't you have a slate? Tell your father to bring one for you."

8.50. Hindi dictation to the fourth and fifth. They are lined up, sitting on the maidan side of the courtyard. Kasim reads in the enormously exaggerated syllables of village teachers.

"Raaaam-zaaaaan aaaaa-yaaaa" (The month of Ramzan came) and so on.

Even in Hindi the subject matter is distinctly Islamic.

The sun is out now. It is very hot, but a cool breeze relieves us once in a while.

Kasim: "Hold your pen straight. Has your mind been filled with grass here? Slaps some wandering and fooling Alif children. "Hey, memorize!" The Alif class explodes into a few seconds of cacophony. Noisy repeating of syllables and letters, then again silence and low talking.

A kite falls into the class. Two boys appear on an adjoining roof, peer down at the school, then in a few seconds one comes running in. Kasim hands the kite to him.

9.00. Hindi dictation is still going on with numerous interruptions. Soon it is over. Kasim corrects all the notebooks well. "It takes an hour to go through all these lessons and these people are sitting here." He refers to the Alif.

Kasim calls: "All those who go to school in Papsara should go now!" About seven Papsara children have permission to attend both the maktab and the government school in their own village.

9.15. The Alif are all busy with their penmanship—slateboard and ink.

Kasim spills red ink all over his hands. "Sister-fucking pen is no good. What to do?" Then he reminds several children that their fees are due.

9.15-9.30. No teaching in either part of the maktab. A young apprentice motor mechanic comes into the maktab and talks with me. Anwar has asked the youth to see if he can get a goat for him. Anwar has gone out for a minute. Kasim scolds an Alif hoy.

"He's a real devil. Never does any work. Look, all the others have written two or three slates-full of writing practice and he hasn't even written one. He just stands up or fools around. Write! Yes, he's a lot of trouble. Sometimes he hasn't got a pen, sometimes no ink. If he has a pen he stubs it out on the ground—he can't write. When he has ink, he (demonstrates) spills it. What a nuisance." The boy begins preparing his slate but soon stops. Nothing more is said. He has weathered the storm until next time.

Kasim goes into the storeroom. He scolds all the talking and wandering children from there. Returns. The fourth and fifth are doing Koran practice inside. The rest are talking.

9.35. Kasim begins helping little ones with penmanship. Soon he makes a couple of pens. He tells one boy he should pay his fees.

9.45. Kasim has been studying the fees register for ten minutes. Now he starts writing practice again. It is over in five minutes.

One of his bundles of reading material from Raunaq is bound in a Rips Royal Malt Whisky advertisement from a Hindi newspaper. It is ten o'clock. Kasim sews a paper cover on a little boy's books. He makes it from some old art compositions found in the storeroom.

"You won't find any master in any other school doing this. They'll say, 'Go get it done at home'."

Several boys are running and turning cartwheels behind Kasim's back in the courtyard. Anwar comes out and slaps three of them. He has been teaching steadily.

Anwar enters the roofed room and starts hearing lessons immediately. Then he corrects a pile of slates with small children's Urdu lessons. The thin white ink he uses disappears before the end of a single word. The resulting words are very faint—practically water. He crosses out incorrect words and writes them clearly at the bottom. Finished, he pretends to throw the bottle of ink and the pen at a small boy who smiles shyly. Anwar also smiles. He treats the children very kindly except when they pester him while he is busy with others.

He has three ways of teaching the Koranic scriptures:

- 1) Child reads, he corrects.
- 2) He chants, child follows the text.
- 3) He chants, child repeats each phrase.

The fifth and fourth grades have three cloth covered Korans, taken down from an alcove in the mosque wall. Three children are reading and rocking back and forth.

Anwar calls to several girls sitting on the step outside. "Come in now girls, I can see you!" They cheerfully come in. He teases several others later, calling one little boy "Tazia-wala baba" for some reason. He jerks a boy's arm when that unfortunate uses his left hand (used after defecation) to mark his place.

Anwar threatens to slap children many times, but although they flinch, they smile. He seldom hits them. There is so much noise I cannot hear the boy next to me reciting. Anwar corrects him from time to time. He tries to get the pupils to pronounce Arabic 'ayin and "h" correctly. He studied Arabic for years. He tells me:

"These children don't understand a thing of what they're reading."

10.20. Anwar begins a fourth grade lesson on how to do namaz (prayer ritual) in the proper way. He tells many stories and gives many examples.

"A man went to do his namaz in an orchard. That orchard was worth 10 lakhs of rupees. A little bird came and sat on a tree near him and began to sing. In the middle of his prayers he began to listen. After a year he lost the orchard. Why? Because he didn't pay attention to God in the proper way. And you would leave your namaz if even two paise fell from your shirt pocket."

A hat-stealing fight breaks out in the courtyard. Kasim punishes two boys. Anwar's pupils look out.

"What are you looking at? Are they passing out laddu (a sweet)?"

Anwar teaches an Urdu lesson about minerals and materials. The children do not know the answers to any of the questions he asks on what they have read. Often they do not know very well what they have read. The system is not geared to maximum understanding in any case. Anwar strikes two children with a thin cane. One cries. After ten minutes of this Urdu lesson, he asks what are the nine things to remember about namaz. No one can tell him. He scolds them saying.

"Yes you are all students. You look so fine going to school every day with the books under your arm. 'Maulvi-sahab, salaam aleikum!' But you don't know anything. If anyone asks you, you'll say, 'Yes, I studied in an Islamic school.' Then if they ask you anything about your religion you won't know. That will be nice. They'll say, 'He studied but he didn't learn'."

10.50. The Islamic knowledge lesson is over. Two fifth graders begin their religious knowledge class. It is over in a few minutes. Kasim leaves the maktab for some reason. Anwar calls a tiny Alif boy in a red cap and a green uniform with an imitation Air Force eagle on the breast pocket. He teaches him a few letters, then goes outside to enforce discipline while Kasim is gone.

11.00. Anwar goes from the school for a minute. Teaching stops for awhile. Kasim returns and Anwar begins to hear fourth grade Urdu, fixing himself a pan in the meantime. Most children are roaming about, fooling. The fourth grade lesson is about respect for parents.

Anwar says, "The best people in this world are the old ones. Nowadays children don't respect their parents. Your mother tells you, 'Go to the bazaar and get me some things,' and you say, 'OK Ma, just a minute.'" Kids are spoiled now."

There is another lesson, on water. The children learn the different kinds of water and what can make water unfit to drink. Anwar asks, "What is left when ice melts?" No one answers. He jokes, "Well, what will be left, eggs?"

Suddenly a girl comes to Anwar and loudly accuses someone of stealing her brother's school bag. The children are quiet, listening for the decision. Anwar asks, "Who was it?"

Immediately there is a chorus of accusations, denials, and general noise. Anwar generally orders, "Give him back his bag." And returns to teaching. It was the uniformed boy's bag.

At 11.20, Kasim takes all the Alif children inside the mosque out for arithmetic table chanting. Anwar hears third-grade Urdu. A boy reads "paresan" ("bothered" or "troubled"). Anwar corrects him, "Say, 'pareshan'." The next sentence, the boy says "paresan." The village dialect is hard to kill. The lesson is about a heathen (obviously Hindu) king of old who prevented people from praying in their mosque and from converting women and children to Islam. The word "kafir" is used—a very insulting word for Hindus but used as legitimate in the maktab.

11.45 .Kasim gets the first and second graders reciting their tables. The older children are still inside with Anwar.

Anwar is taking a long time. Old Kasim gets impatient and talks of various subjects. He is hungry himself, but says, "They must be hungry, poor things, some of them come without eating anything. Usually we finish by 12 but today Anwar is teaching longer."

At last the older children issue from inside. Both teachers come out and stand by the stairs. All the children shout "Salaam Aleikum" at the top of their lungs as they leave. A few fifth and fourth graders remain. Kasim will give them some problems to do at home. Some boys roll up their mats and put them in the store room.

Because the children never had any recreation period, recess or break from the daily routine, Thursday was special. On Thursday, the day before the Friday holiday, the children had namaz practice, that is, they practised the rituals of prayer. The children did everything with great energy and speed when it was time for namaz practice. It was like a game for them. I preserved one such occasion in my notes.

At eleven o'clock on Thursday morning, the maktab dissolves in noise. It is time for namaz. A crowd of children issue from inside the mosque running and shouting. A few children sweep the inside of the mosque and roll up the mats.

Anwar lines up the children in three lines, girls and boys separately, each line graded according to size. Each child was left just enough room to perform all the rituals. The girls covered their heads with their scarfs. The boys almost all had their caps on. Anwar took a long time to get everything set to his satisfaction.

Kasim took no part. Then Anwar began to chant loudly in the Arabic verses of the Koran. He stopped at each phrase and the children loudly repeated it. At the signal "Allahu akbar" the children cupped their hands to their ears, spread their hands in supplication, or knelt and prostrated. Anwar walked up and down the lines, clearly in his element. If a child dared to say a word to his neighbour, get out of line, or look around, Anwar scolded them or shoved or slapped them lightly. In the middle of the praying he put in some Urdu prayers for "my parents, my friends" and others. There was no playing or flagging attention.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MAKTAB AT JALALPUR

Jalalpur was two miles from Lilauli, two hundred yards from the main highway. It was a much bigger village than Lilauli with 1,964 people in 1961 and well over 2,000 by 1971. A jumble of brick houses and narrow, filthy lanes, the village had few spreading shade trees and not much of the rural charm of Lilauli. Jalalpur rose towards its centre, and streams of black filth ran down this slope into several stinking pools. A badly-weathered brick road used to run from the highway north of the village to the distant brickworks. With potholes pockmarking nearly every foot, it was almost impossible to ride a bicycle over it. A dirt lane led across the fields for a hundred yards to join the canal-side dirt road that went to Lilauli and Baburi. A few yards down the canal road in the opposite direction from Lilauli lay Jalalpur's hamlet of Rabbi Khara.

Jalalpur was attuned to Lucknow city. The airport, an adult literacy centre and several factories were close by. Even in 1970 there was electricity in the village. People had only to walk two hundred yards to board a bus that would arrive at Hazrat Ganj in an hour. According to villagers, at least 60 per cent of the population worked outside the village, another 30 per cent farmed and 10 per cent were poor, landless labourers.

I wanted to study the *maktab* (Muslim primary school) at Jalalpur because a very large number of Muslim children in India begin (and all too often, end) their education in schools just like the one to be described here. Discussion of education at the grassroots must include such institutions, particularly in Lucknow District, home of a long Muslim cultural tradition. There is a dearth of information on the day-to-day working and organization of *maktabs* in South Asia as a whole. This study of the Jalalpur *maktab*, then, is meant to fill that gap as well as provide a contrast to the government school at Lilauli, only two miles distant.

I confined my attention to the Muslim *mohalla* of Jalalpur because the *maktab* was attended only by Muslim children. The Muslims were

divided among the Shaikh, Pathan, Faqir, and Darzi castes. In the village as a whole the Muslims made up roughly 15 per cent of the total.

The Muslim community, however, had not been fortunate when it came to land. They owned only 6.7 per cent of Jalalpur's land; 93 bighas out of a total of 1,372, making them a distinctly non-agricultural community. A few Hindu families controlled more land than anyone else, but for as long as people could remember the land had been divided among many families. No ex-zamindar could be found in Jalalpur. Land was becoming increasingly valuable, even in 1970, when the coming urbanization was heralded by the presence of a Pahari family from the Himalayan foothills of Uttar Pradesh, the first total strangers to reside in the village. By 1975, the holdings of a Sindhi who had fled Pakistan in 1947 with money and bought a huge tract north of the village along the highway, had become priceless, as industries and housing estates moved out from Lucknow. By 1982, Jalalpur had been nearly swallowed up by the city and more villagers had enriched themselves by selling their land.

None of the Jalalpur Muslims was important on a village-wide scale, though a Muslim had been *pradhan* some years before. He died before I came. Four Muslims did serve on the village panchayat along with 16 Hindus, but they were unimportant men, even within the Muslim *mohalla*. As in Lilauli the panchayat was not an important, decision-making body, and serious village politicians did not usually become involved with it.

The Muslim *mohalla* was at the northern edge of the village with about 50 households in all. The Faqirs, none of whom were beggars, though that is their traditional caste occupation, lived outside the village along the brick road while the rest of the Muslim community was divided into three small neighbourhoods.

The westernmost neighbourhood was the poorest with several mud houses left in 1970. Only one man of importance in the community lived there. By far the dirtiest neighbourhood, the lanes were impassable during the monsoon. The other two neighbourhoods were cleaner and had brick houses. Each had its "big man" competing in a quiet rivalry for leadership of the Muslim community. One, Zaki, was a young (31) worker at a government precision-instrument factory in Lucknow. Of all the villagers I met, both in Jalalpur and Lilauli, Zaki was the most articulate, the most aware of the world. Though he lived in a village, his perceptions were

essentially urban. This was important because he played a leading role in the *maktab*. The leader of the other neighbourhood, a short man of 53 with the build of a wrestler, Shaikh Ahmad was soft-spoken and illiterate, but one of the biggest Muslim landowners with ten bighas. He was known to all by his nickname, "He-man," doubtless a man who would stand for no nonsense.

The centre of the Muslim *mohalla* had a wide open square that villagers called the maidan. A number of brick houses faced on to it as well as three small village-style stores and a government mail box. Two fetid rivulets of black and green ooze ran down into the maidan from the slope and disappeared into a culvert on one side of the square. Cattle lay on earthen front verandas, bullock teams on their way to plough were driven through the square and small, dirty chickens scratched the earth and scattered garbage. A small, white-washed brick mosque, 50 to 60 years old, occupied one side of the square. Two diminutive minarets emerged from the roof. Entry to the mosque was through a narrow gate of iron rods, and up several stairs to a brick platform, seven feet off the ground, on which the mosque was built.

The centrally-located mosque served as a Muslim community centre. Each evening, and especially Friday, freshly-bathed men in clean white *kurta* and checked *lungi* (sarong) strolled unhurriedly to the mosque, performed their ablutions and prayers (*namaz*) and then stood about gossiping, looking out idly over the maidan. The daily ritual provided a welcome relief from work. There was nothing to do of an evening in Jalalpur. People could not often afford to go to the city for amusement. Gossiping and performing the familiar old rituals were the only forms of cheap, available entertainment. Though close to the city, Jalalpur retained much of its traditional character.

The *maktab* was run in the mosque. The story of the founding of the *maktab* in Jalalpur as told by Ghaffur shows the traditional nature of the school:

We used to have a big *milad* (prayer meeting) here in Jalalpur on this very maidan each year on the Prophet's Birthday. Big coloured canopies were stretched overhead and well-known maulvis came from Lucknow to attend. We served everyone sweets. Muslims came from all surrounding villages. When we decided to have a *maktab*, we asked all the villagers to give donations for founding the school

rather than for holding another *milad*. We didn't invite the maulvis from the city any more and served only *batasha* (cheap candy) instead of sweets. When all the people were assembled we asked for donations. Many men from other villages proudly said, "I donate such and such amount." But afterwards, only the people from Jalalpur actually paid. That's how we started the *maktab*.

From the outset this school fitted into its environment. Indeed, it sprang from its heart. The Muslims worked and donated money to establish a school where their children could learn Urdu and their religion. But soon they ran into trouble. Akhtar Husain told me what had happened:

It's against the law to start up your own private school with no government affiliation. So, a case was brought against us when we tried. We affiliated with Raunaq-i-Islam (an old Arabic educational institution in Lucknow, called "Raunaq" for short) as they conform to government regulations. Then no one could touch us. When Raunaq took over, we all—the whole committee—had to sign an agreement that from then on everything was in their hands. They control choice of teachers, texts to be used, and subjects to be taught. We in the village can't change things as we please. We don't have control over the school but we can appeal to Raunaq for whatever we want. If the villagers have a complaint they make it to those of us on the committee. Or they make it to the teachers directly. If they complain to us, we inform Raunaq and they may act on the matter.

The villagers had to surrender their *maktab* to urban control almost immediately. But both Jalalpur and Raunaq-i-Islam had the same aspirations for education. If anything, the urban institution was more Islamic-minded than the villagers. I shall return to this point later.

The government would not accept the *maktab* until there was a guarantee that a sufficient proportion of secular subjects would be taught. This was in tune with the general policy of secularization of education begun in British times and stepped up after 1947. *Maktab* pupils were required to study Hindi, geography, science, arithmetic, and art as well as Urdu, Arabic, and Islamic tradition. Despite the modern subjects and a degree of government control, the *maktab* was still a traditional institution.

Inspection and supervision were not tight because Raunaq-i-Islam, the supervising institution, was eight miles away across the city. The

Jalalpur *maktab* did mostly what it was originally meant to do: provide Islamic education. The secular subjects were taught but not emphasized. There were two government schools in Jalalpur, a girls' school with very poor attendance and the regular government primary school, which was located not in Jalalpur itself, but in the hamlet of Rabbi Khera. This school used to be in the largest building on the maidan in the Muslim *mohalla*, but it had grown too big before 1970. The houses of Jalalpur were so tightly packed together that the only possible site for a new school was in Rabbi Khera.

The government Junior Basic School presented serious competition to the *maktab*. After passing through the five grades of the *maktab* a pupil had nowhere to go for further Urdu-Islamic education but Raunaq-i-Islam. That institution was far away, and fees were an expensive Rs. 40 a month. Bus fare would have been an extra rupee a day. All this meant that *maktab* graduates who wanted to continue their education had to join local government schools. There they were often behind the others, especially because they were weak in the Hindi Devanagari script, used in all the text books. Zaki felt that the educational facilities offered by the Jalalpur *maktab* were much better than having nothing at all, but he added:

I'm not satisfied with it yet. It could be better. For instance, take our children who study in the *maktab* and learn Urdu. After the *maktab* there is no way they can study engineering or become doctors in Urdu. They must change their language. I would like to see a system in which they could progress throughout in Urdu. We must do this ourselves.

Raunaq-i-Islam, the Arabic-Islamic college to which the Jalalpur *maktab* was affiliated, sat on the north bank of the Gumti River close to Lucknow University. It was set well back from the river-bank road with a spacious lawn with many bushes and trees in front of the main building. The driveway up to an imposing portico passed under a huge *jamun* tree. In season, a number of small boys were usually energetically engaged in throwing rocks and pieces of brick up into the branches with hopes of knocking off some of the small purple fruit. Behind the palatial administration building, stood the much more modern-looking hostels. Students from all over the Islamic world attended Raunaq as well as crowds of local boys.

Even though the two fish of the Nawabs of Avadh arched over the portico and the place had the high ceilings and bare look of a confiscated palace, the college was built in British times. Most of the clerks and officials dressed traditionally in white Muslim caps, kurta and pajama. All spoke in polished Urdu. Mr K, aide to the Registrar, sat in a room with high ceiling and faded yellow walls, and a brick floor. A partition blocked off Mr K's desk from the part of the room near the door. Students spoke to him through a wicket. A fan moved slowly over head; bare bulbs hung from the walls. The only decorations were several Islamic inscriptions on plaques. Two old clerks, white bearded, worked at desks liberally supplied with pigeon holes. Shelves and some old wicker chairs completed the picture. Mr K described the way Raunaq ran the *maktabs* under its control:

Our aim is to give basic education in the Koran and religious training up to the fifth grade. Those who want to study Arabic after the fifth must come here to Raunaq. We have more specifically religious education than the Dini Talimi Council (another organization dedicated to the propagation of Islamic education on a national scale) because that's our aim—to provide such education. They aim at giving the children a typical secular education but with elements of Urdu and religious-cultural training on top of that.

The subjects we teach are religion, Urdu, penmanship, letter composition, geography of the District and State, History, Math, English—but only the primary reader—and Hindi up to the second reader. Raunaq publishes its own books.

There are six Raunaq-run schools in Lucknow, including that in Jalalpur. Well, it's in a village but we call it a city school. It's near the airport after all.

On his monthly visit the inspector records his comments, suggestions, and the needs of the school in an inspector's book. We read it; we give the necessary instructions to the school. If the same criticisms are there the next month, the instructions are repeated in stronger terms. Our inspector works for the Dini Talimi Council. His name is Zahir Shah Siddiqi. From the first to the fourth grades, exams are set by the inspector and administered in the school. The teachers assist at examinations in schools other than their own. The fifth grade exam is given to all fifth graders together here at Raunaq.

We set three exams a year, quarterly, half, and final. The fifth come to Raunaq only for the final. The session starts from Id ul-Fitr. At Bakri Id there are the quarterly exams and then five days' vacation. In May we have the six monthly examination because here at Raunaq there is June vacation. Then the final is on the 20th of Ramzan. After ten days' vacation the session begins over. If May and Bakri Id coincide (the Muslims use a lunar calendar without an extra month) the six-monthly examination is given at Muharram.

We pick our teachers so that in each school one is a retired government teacher or a Dini Talimi-type teacher and one is a graduate of Raunaq. The graduates from Raunaq must hold an Alim degree to qualify for being a teacher. This degree takes 14 years from the first grade. The scale of pay is from Rs.45 to Rs.90 plus a dearness allowance which is 50 per cent of the pay.

Thus *maktab* teachers earned between Rs. 67.50 and Rs. 135 a month and that was only for the Alim degree holders. Retired government teachers got less. It was not a well paid occupation.

The Dini Talimi Council had its Lucknow office in a congested section of the old city. It was difficult to find in the crowded, narrow streets that converge into Aminabad bazaar, the biggest in the city. When I inquired at the Rocket Laundry, a servant guided me through a dark passageway and across a courtyard. There, in a dim, cluttered office, was the desk of Zahir Shah Siddiqi, inspector of the Jalalpur *maktab*.

Siddiqi, a short man of 42 with a fluffy black beard, long nose, a hanging lower lip, and a very thin figure, wore traditional Muslim dress. He spoke well and freely. Originally from District Bahraich northeast of Lucknow, Siddiqi-ji had been in Lucknow for seven years. All his relatives except his wife and children were still in Bahraich. The office manager for the Dini Talimi Council and also a proof reader for their textbooks and other publications, Siddiqi got his education in a Bahraich *maktab*, studied Arabic and Persian and also went to Hindi school up to Middle school (pre-1947 eighth grade). The Dini Talimi Council (DTC) trained him to be a teacher and inspector.

Siddiqi came to be the inspector for Jalalpur and the other Raunaq *maktabs* because the head of the DTC was also on the board of directors at Raunaq. He had received special training for this job. His duties were to go once a month to each of Raunaq's five schools on Sundays when the

DTC was closed. The obvious enthusiasm and dedication of this man, even allowing for slight exaggeration, were too plain for me to doubt the worth of what he said:

I see that the children have progressed up to the point they should be at after such-and-such number of months' training. I hear their lessons and have them read. I watch them do examples and see how they write on their slates. I check to see that not only has the teacher corrected their notebooks in red ink, but also that the children have re-done their work to learn from their mistakes. I listen to each child read. Then too, I guide the teachers in their teaching methods. I tell them that a school is not a jail and the children should like to stay and learn, not just wait to escape. The teachers shouldn't treat them as if they were there to be punished. Whatever my comments and observations are, I write them in the register. Yes, the inspectors in government schools are different. They only go so that their name should be in the register and so that they may collect their T.A. (Travel Allowance).

I could collect a T.A. from Raunaq, but I don't feel I should take the money. I go by cycle. Suppose I was invited for dinner by someone in Jalalpur, wouldn't I go on my bicycle? Sure. So why should I take money when I'm doing a good deed?

I get Rs.25 a month from Raunaq for doing this job.

I like Jalalpur. First I like to be in the countryside—the greenery and fresh air. Also I like the people. They are all good people and I enjoy talking with them. The children are a different type than you find here. Jalalpur is quite *shahariya* (citified) in many ways, but still it's a village compared to the real city. Here the children grow up in the narrow streets full of noise and vehicles, running wild with all sorts of playmates. In the village, the children have a much simpler life—all of one piece. Their nature reflects this just as the city children reflect their surroundings. In the city, children's minds are forever changing and restless.

In Jalalpur, the *maktab* was supervised, in theory, by a "board" of about 50 members—all the Muslims of the *mohalla*. Within the "board" which never assembled in its entirety, was an executive committee of eleven men called the *anjuman* or "committee." These men were the active ones in *maktab* affairs. The five officers comprised the president,

Qari Amin Ullah; Zaki, the general secretary; Akhtar Husain, the joint secretary; Ghaffur, the treasurer; and "He-man," officer-at-large. (Being illiterate, he could only hold such an office). The six other members of the committee included Muhammed Anwar, the teacher. It is illuminating to examine the *maktab* organisation in Jalalpur through these men.

Qari Amin Ullah, the president of the *maktab* committee, did not live in Jalalpur. To meet him people had to travel two and a half miles down the main road into the nearest of the Lucknow bazaars. This was once a garden spot where the Nawabs relaxed, far away from the intrigues of court. The city has swallowed the once beautiful area, and by 1970 it was a chiefly Punjabi bazaar, located conveniently close to many new housing developments. Behind one of the few Muslim-owned businesses, a lumber yard, stands a large whitewashed mosque with three bulbous domes, usually soiled by soot from the nearby Railway Workshops. The qari was employed at this mosque. (*Qari* is a title signifying that the holder can recite the Arabic of the Koran in the correct manner). My field notes reveal something of Amin Ullah's lively personality as well as his relationship to the *maktab*.

There was a group of perhaps a dozen bearded men talking animatedly by the mosque stairs. When several looked up inquiringly, I asked for the Qari-ji. A young man detached himself from the group, very fresh and clean in white embroidered kurta, pajama and skullcap.

The Qari has a broad face, dark with lively eyes. He smiles a lot. He obviously enjoys hearing himself talk and enjoys talking—the more listeners the better.

He lives in tiny, cramped quarters built on to the side of the mosque. They consist of a dirty courtyard a few yards square and one room, almost a closet. The room was very dirty with only a charpai and two chairs. He apologized, "I haven't been living here for four months. The wall fell down in the rains. I've been getting it fixed." We brought the two chairs into the shade of the mosque outside his squalid courtyard.

RSN: "How did you get to be president of the Jalalpur Maktab Committee?"

QAU: "I've been in this mosque since 1960 as qari. A few men from Jalalpur work here in the Railway shops and often came to do their

namaz. They got to know me and perhaps they liked my reading and the way I could argue on religious subjects. So, they invited me to speak at their milad which they held every year on the Prophet's Birthday. I went and would speak on why we should respect him, why he came to us, what were his teachings, how good he was—and the villagers liked the way I spoke. So they were starting a committee to help the village and maintain a maktab. At the election of officers my name was put-forward as President (sadar) and so I became President."

RSN: "What are your duties as President?"

QAU: "I have to attend any meetings they hold. I have to settle any arguments or make any decisions that cannot be made by Jalalpur people themselves. And once in a while I'm supposed to inspect the school to see if it's going all right."

RSN: "Can you tell me about any of the decisions you made?"

QAU: "There was one time that the members of the committee had fallen out over something. Not everyone could agree what was to be done. Some said do this, some said do that, others said this person should be thrown off the committee, and some wanted to put an end to the whole committee. I went and settled the arguments.

"Another time there was a big to-do because Zaki went and made a surprise inspection of the school one day and was not pleased. He wrote a long, critical report and sent it on his own to Raunaq. Other villagers said that he should have called a meeting and made his criticisms before the whole group and discussed them. I asked Raunaq to disregard Zaki's letter and made the decision that no one should act on his own in such matters. I mean, Zaki was trying to make his dictatorship! (in English)."

RSN: "So do you often go to Jalalpur?"

QAU: "Well, I haven't been there for about five months. I've been so busy..."

RSN: "I think you studied at Raunaq, right?"

QAU: "Yes, I did a year's qari course there, then began the seven year Alim degree. I'm also a hafiz (one who knows the Koran by heart).

After I finished the qari course, I didn't know what to do. Should I study on, go back to my village, or stay in Lucknow? It took me a year to make up my mind. When I'd finished at Raunaq I began studying hikmat (to be a hakim, doctor of Muslim medicine) at T. College over past the Chauk. It's a course in Yunani medicine. I have about a year or so more to go. I can't study full time because of my responsibilities at home."

RSN: "May I ask how old you are?"

QAU: "About 27-28. People are always surprised to see me. (Laughs). They're looking for an old man, hardly able to see, only a fringe of hair left, all bent over with a stick. They can't believe that I—I should be the qari in this mosque, which is a big one. They think, 'Who's this kid?' (Laughs). One old fellow came asking for the qari and I said, 'I'm him'. He just stood there staring, putting on his glasses, taking them off, putting them on. (All the listeners and I too laugh at his comical expression). But this job doesn't have any relation to age; it depends on education. That's why I got it when I was only 17 or 18."

RSN: "Do you know Mu. Anwar-sahab at Jalalpur? He also studied at Raunaq."

QAU: "Do I know him?!! Listen, if I told you the whole story about Anwar and me it would take all day and last till tomorrow! We both came from the countryside, we both lived with our mother's relatives there, and we both came to Lucknow with nothing. I'll just tell you the beginning. When I arrived in Lucknow I was only 13. I didn't have any arrangements or anything. I was sitting outside the college with nothing to eat. Along came Anwar. He had a handful of chickpeas, so we shared them and that's how we started. We both went to Raunaq together but he went into teaching and I've been in this hakim training for years."

Amin Ullah is poised and confident; an intelligent man. He speaks good Urdu but there is still some "village" in it. He uses numerous pious expressions which are hard to render in English.

"My father came from Indore and lived in Sultanpur with his wife's family. He died 15 years ago. My mother's dead, but in those days she lived alone with my sister who's married now, my wife and four

children. I was married at the age of 13, in 1955, just before beginning my studies. We live outside a village of 1500-2000 people. It was very dangerous living far from the main kasbah. Nowadays two flour mills have sprung up near the house so I don't worry so much about my wife and children alone.

"The only person to look after my family has been myself. We have only a little land. I used to have to look after that too. Since the second year of my hikmat studies I can practise a little. I have a small pharmacy where I sit one day a week when I go home. One day's work pays for my fare and a week's expenses (Rs. 5-10). When I finish my studies I'll go back to my village and set up practice there. There's a great potential. There's no dispensary there, nothing. I had a chance to go to Egypt to study Arabic Literature at Al Azhar University in Cairo—they choose six boys from Raunaq to go every year—but due to my family troubles I couldn't go.

"This mosque is 600 years old (sic), built in Aurangzeb's time (1658-1707). It's named after him, the Alamgir Mosque. My salary is a waqf (religious endowment) of a Nawab of Jahangirabad. It was made 200 years ago. Nine rupees a month. There were Rs. 2 allotted to a sweeper, Rs. 2 for oil for light, and Rs. 1 for the azan (morning call to prayer—before dawn). Now there's electricity, no azan, and the congregation does the sweeping. So I get Rs. 14 (Laughs). It's a princely sum. It used to be like Rs. 1000 is now, but they never raised it to match the times.

"My duties are to conduct the Friday noon prayer and prayers during the whole month of Ramzan, plus on other holidays."

The villagers chose a president who was both a villager and a devout Muslim with Islamic training yet had urban experience and contacts with Muslim institutions in the city. He knew more of the wider world than almost any Jalalpur Muslim.

Zaki, the general secretary of the maktab committee, and two other young Muslims, relatives of his, started a pen-manufacturing workshop on the outskirts of Lucknow. The simple room contained a solid workbench, covered with various tools, and a plastic extruder. On shelves and on the floor were piles of empty sample boxes, moulds, pans, *lota*, papers, tape, and other odds and ends. Light came through a door and single window. A large new power meter fastened to the wall. One side

of the room was taken up by a charpai with a small lathe underneath. A little mouse was scampering about. I recorded our interview in my field notes:

"I'm 31 years old, married with four children. I work at GPIF (Government Precision Instrument Factory) as a tester. They make microscopes and other things. My father was in the Railway service but is retired now. I've lived in Jalalpur all my life. I did travel a little though. I went on a Labour Department education tour for 14 days in 1962 to Punjab. There were 45 of us. I saw Delhi, Amritsar, Nangal Dam, Ambala, Ludhiana, and the 1962 exhibition in Delhi.

"I'm a religious man and I do say my prayers often. You're supposed to do them five times a day. I try to do them when possible, especially on Fridays. I go to a mosque near work or in Jalalpur. I never see films. Well, once in a year with a friend. That's all. I read many newspapers. The canteen at our factory has very good facilities for that. When I finish work I go read for an hour, then come home. I read the local Urdu, English, and Hindi papers and three from Delhi too. We used to have a library at the canteen but they never got any new books so I'd read them all. People lost interest and it was discontinued.

"People used to point their fingers and exclaim when they saw any literate boy; now it's commonplace. I finished high school. I got married then so I didn't go on. First I studied in Jalalpur, then in the city. I studied in Hindi and English and also got some first-aid training. My father is an Urdu Middle School pass and he also studied to be a patwari (village clerk). My mother is illiterate. My wife studied at home in Urdu and Arabic. I know them also, and I even had an Arabic teacher. My eldest son passed through the maktab and is now in the seventh grade at a city school. The other two sons study at the maktab. My daughter is too small still, but she'll also study. I hope to have one son do an Alim degree at Raunaq.

"From the point of view of education, I think the maktab is better than government schools. It's more than better. Our teachers are not government servants, they are paid by subscription. So the villagers are alert to what they do and they (the teachers) must be on their toes. In government schools, no one cares what the teachers do since they are not paying for them. There the Inspector comes once in two or six months, the teachers know the day and remain alert then. The rest of the time they can be slack."

Zaki discussed the maktab. "At first the village had to raise Kasim Ali's salary from among the 50 members of the 'board,' because Raunaq provides the salary only for Anwar. We used to have each family save some flour, whatever they could afford, at each meal. Then it was collected and sold to raise the money for Kasim. But this method didn't work out so well. Some people didn't give. Then, it took a lot of trouble to collect it and sell it since everyone is busy. Also, once or twice it happened that someone appropriated it for himself. The arrangement with Kasim now is that Raunaq pays him Rs. 15 a month, half his salary. We pay the other Rs. 15 and we gave him a list of families where he can eat so he gets two meals a day like that."

As general secretary of the maktab committee, Zaki was concerned about the education Jalalpur children were getting. He differed with the conservative members like "He-man" over improvements and the low efficiency of Kasim Ali. These quarrels tended to become personal power struggles and removed from the condition of the maktab. Zaki said:

Nowadays things are not running smoothly. There's friction within the committee. There will be a meeting on the 7th of August and perhaps then the officers will be changed and some work begun. [No meeting took place]. (Points to a list of committee members). Some people on this list want to work, others do not. (points to his own name, Amin Ullah, Ghaffur, and Akhtar Husain, excluding 'He-man'). These want to work, the other one doesn't.

We really shouldn't be holding the school in the mosque. It's against the rules of Islam in a way. There are 50-60, maybe 80 children going there every day. Not everyone is clean but who can check them all? So they are defiling the mosque in a religious sense, but there's no way out. We are planning to build a separate school. We've even got the bricks piled over there but nothing has been done. As I told you, there's friction among members of the executive committee, that's part of the trouble.

Akhtar Husain was joint secretary of the maktab. A tall man, slightly buck-toothed with close-cropped hair, Akhtar was hearty but a bit stubborn and often brief or blunt in his statements. He worked in the city at the Locomotive Workshop.

One week I'm on day duty, one on evening duty, and one on night duty. My father was a farmer here in Jalalpur and I've been here since childhood. We have two bighas of land.

In my childhood most of the houses here were of mud. Now most are brick. No one used to have bicycles, now everyone has one. There haven't been any other changes. The village has remained the village. The city stayed the city.

I studied up to the fifth class here in Jalalpur in both Urdu and Hindi. My parents were illiterate and so is my wife. My eldest son, 13, is in the sixth grade in a village down the road. The next boy, 8, is in the maktab. My other two are still too small. I sent my son to the maktab because there they give religious education. Afterwards I'll send him for government education.

Education is all useful. There aren't any useless subjects. Men are like buffaloes roaming about. They're hicks. With education they get their humanity. They progress. They know what's happening. That's the use. My education was useful to me. Why, I couldn't hold the job I have now if I couldn't read or write.

In the old days, they wrote on leaves. They just learned their work and religion. Now education is for progress. We have the atom bomb nowadays. Look at Jawaharlal Nehru. He was a product of modern education. Any child here in Jalalpur could do the same. He could go ahead and learn to make an atom bomb too. The education now is for progress, that's why.

Akhtar was eager to talk about his role in the maktab to an interested listener. No one in Lilauli had ever been so eager to discuss the school.

The villagers keep a close watch on the goings on in the maktab especially on the teachers' attendance. They're paying for them, so the teachers can't be absent like the government schools.

Anwar has been here since Raunaq took over in 1962. At first he was alone. Then as the Raunaq school over in M. Nagar was doing poorly and Jalalpur was doing well, Anwar was transferred there and the old man who taught there was posted here. He had to bicycle here from the Chauk and go back—16 miles a day. Anwar too had to travel a long way. After some time, they were transferred back again. Kasim came in 1964.

From the beginning the committee members have been the same. The village refuses to let us step down in favour of others. No one else

wants to work. It's a lot of responsibility and bother. (Takes out two registers from inside his house). I have to keep these in order as joint secretary. This one is a record of the subscriptions paid and the amounts spent on books and fees for poor children. Besides the subscriptions we also get money from the sale of the goat skins at Id ul-Zoha. (Muslim holiday at the end of the pilgrimage season when goats are sacrificed in memory of Ibrahim's offering of Ismail). In addition to helping the poor children and paying Rs. 15 a month to Kasim, we have a fund to help travellers who may lack money to go on or to help bury dead strangers with no known kin. (Opens register, very neatly kept in red and blue ink). Let's see, in 1969, Rs 47.46 were given to poor children in the way of books. Since 1966 we haven't helped any travellers but in that year we gave about Rs 60 to four people. It's very hard to be sure about such people, but when we feel there's a needy case, someone goes and buys a ticket. Of course we hope they don't get off at the first station and come back to Lucknow, but one never knows. This is a kind of *zaqat* (alms) as prescribed in the Koran. You should give Rs. 2.50 in every Rs. 100. Of course, if that Rs. 100 is your monthly salary, you don't give it—who can afford it?

This other register is the one for fees. If the child is too poor to pay, I write here in red, "maaf" [excused]. If the fees haven't been paid, it shows in red in these (points). Zaki and I decide who is needy and who can pay. Here in Jalalpur almost everyone has a city job and at least two or three bighas. No one is suffering. But there are five orphans and fatherless children getting free tuition. We know who they are because we live here. Ten others are in arrears as of June, one for six months, the rest for less.

Gaffur, the next committee member, a 31-year-old storekeeper, was the *maktab* treasurer. His family had land, but his father farmed while Gaffur tended the busy store. Customers arrived to ask for small amounts of *gur*, oil, *dal*, sugar, spice, *dalmoth* (a kind of snack), matches, hair oil, small wrapped candies generally called "toffee", cigarettes—one or two at a time—or local cheroots. Ghaffur took the item off the shelf as he squatted on the floor and placed it by the doorway. The customer picked it up, handing him the money. Ghaffur went into the city almost daily to purchase new stock because he had only a bicycle to transport it. He participated in the weekly bazaar in a neighbouring village. He said:

I like to read Urdu books, but nowadays I don't get much time, I used to read more...novels mostly. I have several of them about Muhammad bin Kasim, Conqueror of Sindh. I bought a few books and I was also a library member for four or five years in a small place in the city. I read Siyasat, the Kanpur Urdu newspaper. I used to read it daily and now I often read the copy that a clerk at the brickworks brings. I did subscribe to it but it would get "lost" along the way.

There has been a great change here in my lifetime. 75 paise in a rupee. [He means 75 per cent of everything has changed]. Children used to treat older people and their parents with honour and respect. Not now. There has been change in education, food, and clothes. More education is available. The lower castes used to be very poor. We were all poor. We didn't have enough to eat. The lower castes, Chamar and Bhangi, were in terrible condition. The lower castes used to respect others. Now they consider themselves as good as anyone and they no longer respect upper castes. All the kids stand around now. They used to be afraid of just a policeman coming to the village. Now even a Deputy Commissioner may come and all will stand in front of him and stare.

I studied up to the 8th grade, first in Jalalpur, then in the city. I studied in Hindi. Urdu was here up to 1949 so I learned that too. My father studied very little, only first and second grade. My mother was illiterate. (Proudly) my wife studied upto the fifth grade. Two of my daughters study in the maktab, the rest are too small. I want to give my children a religious education. Afterwards, I'll send them to Hindi school. Nowadays the only thing to do is to teach them to respect their parents. If they get education they'll choose what they want themselves. You can't decide beforehand to make them into a Deputy Commissioner. Anyway, these days, even if a kid is a high school pass, he'll have to farm.

My education didn't help me that much. Well, just a little in shopkeeping. It could have been of help in getting a job. But you know, there's a lot of feeling against us [Muslims]. With only a middle school pass what kind of job could I hope for? Some of my schoolmates in those days are driving rickshaws now. Another, a Thakur, tried to start a business on Rs. 75. Nowadays BAs and MAs are unemployed.

The profit of education is that children travel the straight path. They honour their mother and father. When they go out of the village, they'll have knowledge. If they see some notice they'll be able to read it. Otherwise, if they're from a village, they'll stay hicks.

As the treasurer of the *maktab*, it was Ghaffur's duty to collect the subscription levelled on every member each month. There are three different levels of member, 50 paise members, Rs. 1 and Rs. 2 members. He himself was a Rs. 2 member.

These days quarrels have sprung up within the Muslim community so that nobody is paying his subscription any more except Akhtar, Zaki and I. We're the only ones that are interested in seeing the maktab improve. Anwar and the Qari-Sahab are interested but they are not men of action. They are just on the committee. The quarrels are over personal matters but they have affected the maktab as well. We need to build a new maktab. The classes were held in many places before we finally settled on the mosque. We used Akhtar's house, a rented place on the outskirts of the village, etc. It's a sin to hold school in the mosque. The filth of the maidan is tracked in by the children every day. It's on the head of every Muslim in the village. But we don't have the money to build a new maktab. No one is giving subscriptions. I have about Rs. 600-700 that was collected. We've got some bricks but we need more. There's a piece of land over there (points) we could buy, but it floods and we'd have to fill it in first and build the maktab on top.

Kasim is paid from the fees that come in. Most people pay the fees all right because they want their children to learn. But they don't think of improvements. The money from the sale of goat hides used to provide enough for helping the poor children with fees and books. You see, those goats are khurbani—offerings to God—and the hides can't be sold by the sacrificers. People from Jalalpur used to go on every Id ul-Zoha to all the neighbouring villages—Qadirabad, Lilauli, Baburi, and Nainwara—and receive the goat hides as donations. Then one of us, Zaki, Akhtar, Mu. Sabir, or myself would take them to the city and sell them. It was all right for us to sell them because we were doing it as a kind of alms to help the poor children. But this year nobody went to collect the hides because of the quarrels. So, no money is coming in. Grades 1-3 pay 25 n.p. a month, the fourth and fifth pay 50 n.p. a month. It's all spent. If the people here don't

realise the need to give subscriptions soon, the school will be moved to Papsara. The people there are anxious to have it. They could give here. The Muslims are doing all right. All have jobs and a couple bighas of land. They all could easily afford to give Rs. 2 a month. They spend that much on biri-cigarettes-pan without thinking of it. If 50 families gave Rs 2 a month for one year, we'd have Rs 1200. With that, along with what we have now, we could easily start a new maktab.

My job is just to collect and keep the subscription money and record who paid. I have it all in a box. If anyone wants it, I just go and get it. I never went around and asked people to give. They'd come here give it. Now no one is giving.

Zaki, Akhtar and Ghaffur, particularly Ghaffur, displayed many of the attitudes associated with the "Protestant Ethic." Ghaffur and Zaki repeated several times that one must work for what one gets. They refused, along with Akhtar, to contemplate spending "unearned" money won in a lottery. Ghaffur also complained that people do not want to earn their own way, but want the government or private donors to help them. None of the nine other interviewees expressed similar sentiment. It is certainly significant that the three men who held such attitudes were the very ones who ran the *maktab* and were most active in making it work.

There was another interesting similarity among the three men. All listed the unemployment problem facing educated people as one of India's main difficulties. Yet all three sent their children to the *maktab* where preparation for outside jobs was weak. They allowed their religious sensibilities to outweigh their economic sense. Other, less aware villagers, were not able to discern the contradiction.

The Jalalpur *maktab* had two serious problems to face besides competition from government schools. First, like Lilauli villagers, Jalalpur Muslims had only a limited interest in education. Their failure to give money or send their children must be seen at least partly in this light. Second was the political problem. Shaikh Ahmad, "He-man," did not contribute anything to the *maktab*. He wanted the *maktab* to be a success and sent his children there, but political supremacy was more important to him. His quiet faction fight with Zaki and the more modern, younger Muslims seriously injured the *maktab* organization. Cooperation was nearly at an end. As Ghaffur pointed out, the *mohalla* could afford to donate money for a real school, but people did not even pay their

subscriptions. No one could decide on a site for a new school, much less take action to build it.

Two young Muslims, Hamid Ali, 19, and unemployed, and Tajuddin, 18, a student, discussed these problems.

Tajuddin: "The reason we have not been able to build a new school is that there are divisions among us. Where you find three people in this mohalla, you'll find four opinions. Everyone sends their children to school, but they can't work together. Nowadays the committee is not working as well as when the maktab was started. Then we were known at Raunaq as an outstanding school, as an example to others"

Hamid Ali interrupts: "We still are".

Tajuddin: "But not as before. Then quarrels began and the work has been stopped. Just lately it looks as if Zaki, Akhtiar, and Ghaffur will do something, but I don't know. We were ready to have the school. You must have seen all the bricks piled over there. (Points to an empty space behind Ghaffur's store bordering on the maidan). The land was owned by four people. One didn't agree to allow the school, so it couldn't be built. [That 'one' was an ally of 'He-man']. He said, 'You can give money, I will not.' So when all are not ready to cooperate... Now the school is in a bad way, but people think only of their own problems."

Despite its problems, the *maktab* was far more closely linked to the higher levels of its organizational structure than the school in Lilauli. The managers of the *maktab's* affairs, the four men presented above, plus the inspector from the Dini Talimi Council, were all concerned and knowledgeable about the school. They were motivated by their religion to take such an active role. There was no one in Lilauli of similar concern. I felt that the *maktab* was truly a community school, no doubt with all the difficulties that can imply, but different from the government primary school pattern.

When we turn to the description of the daily round in the *maktab*, the patterns of teaching, and the general ambience, there is more similarity to the Lilauli school. Yet still, some differences remain.

Organizational Details of the maktab

The *maktab* was held in the Jalalpur mosque. The mosque was well maintained, being a religious place as well as a school. Two broad stripes

of bright blue and green and trimmed with white on a dull background circled the inside room (See on Figure 4). The two windows were screened with plaster-lattice—a faint reminder of the intricate red sandstone or marble screen windows of Mughal architecture. An Urdu sign-board in black and white, announcing that “this *maktab* is sponsored by the Jalalpur Muslim Board,” was the only decoration. The red, white and blue ink of numerous village children stained the walls and brick floor. The well beyond the raised step which marked off the “pure” area of the courtyard was used by villagers during class. Children who wanted a drink also used it, though they could scarcely haul up the heavy tin bucketful of water. Several sienna-coloured earthen pots stood against the step on the “impure” side. They were used for washing the hands and feet of the faithful.

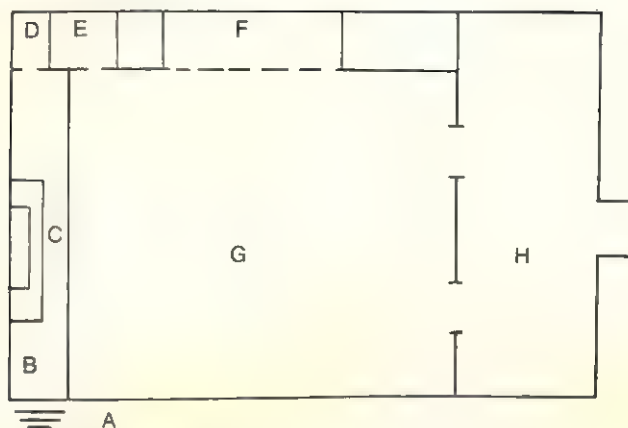
Only the teachers used the lavatory. Children ran to the fields beyond the houses across the maidan.

Summer hours in the *maktab* were from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., but usually school was out by noon. In the cooler months, classes ran from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. School was held every day except Friday, and the only break was ten days during Ramadan, other Muslim holidays, and two Indian national holidays—26 January (Republic Day) and 15 August (Independence Day).

Sixty-three pupils from Jalalpur and Papsara villages were enrolled in the five grades. Forty-five to 55 children out of the 63 attended on any one day. All were Sunni Muslims, as no Shias lived in either village, and for obvious reasons, Hindus were not interested. Boys outnumbered girls but just barely. More boys attended the government school in Rabbi Khera because some parents felt they had to be prepared for jobs. No one would dream of a girl's working. They would marry at an early age. A five-year *maktab* education was considered a modern luxury that these girls were lucky to enjoy.

The highest grade had the smallest number of pupils. Only one boy had ever gone on to Raunaq-i-Islam. There was no accurate information as to how many children continued their education in government schools, but everyone in Jalalpur seemed to think that the number was probably as low as in Lilauli.

Teacher's training was not required. Anwar got Rs. 100 a month as a teacher plus some outside income. Kasim received only Rs. 30, plus his food. (In 1970, a typical house servant in Lucknow made Rs. 40-50, plus food).



- A Staircase from ground
- B Place to put shoes
- C Well for pre-prayer ablutions
- D Lavatory
- E Storeroom
- F Raised platform for smallest children
- G Main open courtyard for facing Mecca while praying.
First three grades met here with Kasim Ali.
- H Roofed sanctuary. 4th and 5th grades met here with
Mu. Anwar. On rainy days, and for Thursday prayer
practice, all classes met here.

Figure 4. The Mosque and School, Jalalpur

To enrol a pupil, a father brought his child, paid the fees and the child was entered. Fees could be waived in cases of extreme poverty, as Akhtar pointed out.

In the store room the teachers maintained a stock of ink, notebooks and the pamphlet-like textbooks that they brought from Raunaq. Children had to buy their own "slates," the same black wooden ones that were used in all village schools. In fact, all the supplies were very similar to those used in Lilauli.

Classroom organization was scant. The pupils were divided into two sections, inside and outside. Anwar taught the older children inside most of the time. He also taught Arabic and Islamic knowledge to all the pupils. Kasim tried to teach all the secular subjects to the first three grades who sat outside, plus arithmetic, Hindi, and General Knowledge to the fourth and fifth. There were too many children and too many subjects to maintain order. The children sat grouped in classes, but constant intermingling and

movement disrupted things almost permanently. If Kasim left the mosque for a minute, the outside classes became very noisy. The Indian sun is very intense; these children were expected to sit quietly without any shade in temperatures over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (40 degrees Celsius) for five hours. When it rained, all crowded into the small roofed section and learning became impossible.

There were several kinds of ritual knowledge in the *maktab* beyond learning how to say prayers properly. Besides the morning school ritual of Islamic slogans, credos and poems, there were highly ritualised aspects to learning Arabic and several other subjects. The children spent hours memorizing nonsense syllables in Arabic. Even by the time they could read passages from the Koran, they still understood nothing. This learning without content occupied a considerable portion of their day, yet it was certainly considered one of the core areas of *maktab* education. General knowledge was also a ritual. Trite answers to big questions were merely memorized:

The lesson is on Muslim customs and holidays.

Kasim: "How are our customs?"

Fourth grade girl: "They are good".

This was accepted as an answer without difficulty.

There was another kind of ritual associated with art, geography, and fifth-grade English, a ritual repeated in schools all over the world. Pupils had to learn a certain short set of facts, for example, the rivers, Blocks, and major towns of Lucknow District. They learned this fixed amount by heart early in the year. Then Kasim had them recite from time to time to see that the knowledge stayed in their heads. At examination time the children had to recite or write exactly what they had memorized. In art, children memorized fixed designs and duplicated them. Art did not stimulate them to express themselves in any way.

Discipline and teaching techniques were the same in Jalalpur as in Lilauli. The common village factor overshadowed the difference between religious and secular training. The only real difference in teaching technique in Jalalpur stemmed from the fact that Kasim and Anwar were doing the work of the Faith. Anwar, a dedicated man, was especially interested in instilling Islamic ritual and tradition in the children. The teachers were more conscientious and more patient than

Bhaiya Lal or other government teachers. They were working for a cause as well as for pay. Also, the *mohalla* kept closer watch on teachers' attendance and their disciplinary methods than did Lilauli parents. The vocabulary used in the *maktab* illustrates nicely a difference between the government school and a more traditional school. The pupils called Kasim "sahab" ("sir") or "Maulvi-sahab." *Maulvi* signifies a learned Islamic teacher. Everyone in Jalalpur addressed Anwar as "*Hafiz-ji*," because he had memorized the entire Koran in Arabic. The children used this form of respectful address too. The teachers never used bad language toward the children, nor was it possible to have caste-based insults when all were Muslim. The Lilauli teachers were addressed as paid servants. The *maktab* teachers received the respects due a teacher in traditional Indian society. Village-teacher relations were correct but not close. Anwar did his job and left for home. Kasim lived in Jalalpur and often sat with groups of gossiping men in the evening. He had no special influence and took a very meek role outside the school as befitted an old man on the edge of charity.

Hamid Ali, 19: "Anwar is a hafiz. Kasim taught my father and grandfather so who would not respect him? Then, he's an old man too."

Tajuddin, 18: "People listen to the teachers. The teachers tell them to send the children at a certain time, to have the children wear certain clothes, to have clean children, to put oil in their hair and antimony in their eyes, to clean their fingernails, and to give them pens and other supplies. People respect the teachers because they teach the children, they are older than us, they work in the mosque, and they are a maulvi and a hafiz."

These young men quoted the reasons for respect they learned in school. People did obey what the teachers told them in areas pertaining to the *maktab*. Otherwise, teachers had little influence in the Muslim community and did not take part in local politics. Their traditional status earned respect but not influence. Two older villagers commented:

"He-man," 53: "We listen to them about education, nothing else. There isn't any lecturing. We respect Anwar because he is a hafiz, but he doesn't do anything special here. He goes home at the appointed time."

Daud Khan, 37: "Anwar teaches and so does Kasim. They both do the same thing. Say so? What connection is there between them and the village? They come at the right time, teach, and go at the right time. Otherwise they don't say anything. People respect them because they're educated men.

In school, Anwar had a higher status than Kasim although there was no designation of headmaster or assistant. Anwar was higher paid and a *hafiz*, taught the older children and had closer ties with Raunaq. Although Kasim was older and had a long teaching experience, he was in a secondary role. Anwar brought news, orders, salaries and supplies from Raunaq. Kasim never went there. The *maktab* was founded for religious reasons and Anwar imparted the religious training. This too gave him status.

For such a small school, the teachers kept an amazing number of records. Kasim managed all nine registers in Urdu. They consisted of:

1. A record of the application for admission of each child with data such as father's name, occupation, etc.
2. General attendance.
3. Teacher's attendance with daily signatures and special red signatures for leave taken.
4. Number of girls and boys and number of days present of each—only for Jalapur children, not those from Papsara.
5. Stock register.
6. Note of books provided to poor children.
7. Fees paid/unpaid.
8. Examination records, number passed or failed, what grades achieved in each subject.
9. Inspection comments, a note on how many children were present on the inspection day. Each entry is countersigned by someone at Raunaq.

The Maktab Teachers

Anwar, a man of traditional thought and behaviour, sustained by his religion, came at age 13, like Qari Amin Ullah, to Lucknow from a village

in Bahraich District. Since then he had lived as caretaker behind a small mosque on the outskirts of Lucknow. He studied at an Islamic school in the old city together with Qari Amin Ullah, became a *hafiz* and went on to Raunaq-i-Islam with Amin Ullah. Anwar began to work on his Alim degree but could not finish. Later he enrolled in Lucknow University to do the same degree (in Arabic). Unfortunately, the year he enrolled, 1960, there were huge floods in Lucknow and eastern U.P. His family's house in Bahraich collapsed and Anwar went home. His enrolment lapsed and he was never able to finish his degree. In August 1968, he was married and had an 18-month-old daughter by 1970. He and his family lived at a small, dilapidated mosque entered through a faded blue-green doorway. A short, unroofed passageway led around the side of the mosque to an inner courtyard. The mosque was peeling and white, flat-roofed with two stubby minarets sticking up at the corners, each only six feet high. The building was constructed late in the last century. In the 1950s and 1960s, it was repaired twice and a roofed veranda in the back added. Anwar spread some straw matting on the veranda for visitors. His wife was in the strictest *pardah*, so no one could enter his quarters except close relatives.

There were no Muslims living in this outer bazaar area of Lucknow. When Punjabi refugees settled here after Partition in 1947, all the Muslims left in fear. Occasionally, on Fridays, workers from factories in the area came for *namaz*; otherwise Anwar prayed alone. Anwar remarked, "A mosque is nothing you can sell." So he remained there alone. He talked to me about the *maktab* and some of his problems in Jalalpur. He also told how he had come to work there.

I knew people at Jalalpur because a few used to come to pray here. Then they invited me to read the Koran and lead the prayers at Jalalpur. I'd get some payment for that. When they began the maktab, they called me to be the teacher.

For the first couple of years when I was alone, the Jalalpur maktab was the best Raunaq had. Then when I was transferred to another school for a couple of years, it began to go down. Now it's spoiled. The children can't do arithmetic because Kasim doesn't teach them properly. This year I'm going to give them special classes after 2 o'clock for one hour. In a week, I'll have them in good shape. I'll do it after Kasim has gone. Nobody will give me anything for it, but then, Kasim isn't responsible to anyone. I have to answer to Raunaq if the children's results are not good.

See, Kasim doesn't know how to teach. He's very clever in getting around the inspectors. When they come they ask to hear the children recite. Kasim stands nearby and gives hints to the children so they'll do all right. The children copy from one another in penmanship exercises. How can they get used to doing it without help? Anyway Kasim is a fake. He knows the tricks...he fixes the registers and has the children's notebooks to show. But the children didn't learn. He was expelled twice from government schools because of being caught in some wrongdoing by the inspector. Each time, after a short while, he was readmitted. At the end, though, he was denied a two-year extension by the Board. He sits with his legs uncovered and stretched out before him. That's no way to act in a mosque, a sacred place. He's not an honourable man. At this age, he should be honourable.

The people in Jalalpur don't pay much attention to their children's education. They don't know what's going on. There's no building for the maktab. It's really hard to sit in the sunshine all day. But the people here don't do anything about it. If the school were in Papsara then by now they would have built accommodation. They are very eager to have a maktab but the contract with Raunaq says that the maktab can't be moved without the consent of the village. There are factions among the Muslims in Jalalpur. That's why I don't want to live there. I do my work and come home. I don't want to be involved.

I have hopes that eventually I'll get a job at Raunaq. I'd like to be a principal. It's hard to get such jobs. You have to know someone there. When there's a vacancy, then they put your name forward. I don't know if I'll get such a job or not. (Smiles wistfully). It depends on senior-junior (in English) too. I'm getting my seniority now.

Anwar received Rs. 25 a month as caretaker of the mosque, about Rs. 100 as a Raunaq teacher and Rs. 20 for tuition. His total income was thus roughly Rs. 145. His quarters were free and the villagers occasionally presented him with milk, fruit or vegetables. It was a minimal existence. Unlike government teachers, though, Anwar had the satisfaction of feeling that he was doing important work, saving the children of Jalalpur for Islam, teaching them time-honoured knowledge of ritual and religion.

Kasim lived alone in Jalalpur. He ate at various homes around the Muslim *mohalla* as part of his payment for teaching.

Kasim: "I was born in 1904 in Itaunja [a large village in the northern part of Lucknow District]. In 1921, I began teaching here in Jalalpur in an Islamic school held in that whitewashed house across the maidan. That school was begun in 1914. Later it became a government school on the request of the Hindus so that Hindi might be taught there. I became a government teacher in this maktab. I don't get any pension. My kismet was bad. The government pension plan for primary teachers went into effect in November 1964, just after I retired. I appealed to the District Board but they turned me down. If I could have extended my teaching for one more year, I would have been eligible. There were six of us in the same position. Three Brahmins and three Muslims. The man in charge was a Thakur. He gave permission to the three Brahmins and refused the three Muslims.

I have three sons and two daughters. They're all married and I have many grandchildren. One son is in the police at Allahabad, two work in a factory at Fatehgarh by Bara Banki.

Kasim's story shows the interchangeability of government and *maktab* teachers. A village Muslim teaching in a government school would be called "Master"; in a *maktab*, he is "*Maulvi-sahab*". He could cope with new attitudes or tasks without experiencing difficulty. The truth about Kasim's lost pension was hard to determine. He himself blamed discrimination, but Anwar said it was due to misdeeds during government service. Kasim was not a good teacher, even by *maktab* standards. There were many extenuating circumstances because his lot was difficult. He had to try to control 30 or 40 children in separate classes, the physical conditions were extremely bad and he was an old man. Kasim tried, but not very hard. But Anwar's problem with Kasim was insignificant when compared to Bhaiya Lal's difficulties with Sita.

The teachers were on their own most of the time. The villagers did not pay attention to their teaching. If Anwar or Kasim was absent, people would inquire; the community was paying for the *maktab*. The majority of Muslims in Jalalpur were illiterate or educated in schools of similar standard. Women did not leave their homes, and most men were away during *maktab* hours, so there were few potential "inspectors." The committee members were more aware of *maktab* realities than the average villager, yet they too expressed general satisfaction with the school. Only the financial arrangements and physical location were seen

as major problems. No one expressed fear of government competition or worry that the children were being ill-prepared. No one, that is, except Anwar, the better teacher.

The monthly inspection by Zahir Shah Siddiqi was useful and helped keep a higher standard of teaching than in Lilauli. Still, there was not much contact with Raunaq. Most Jalalpur Muslims had never been to Raunaq. (All did know that Raunaq ran the *maktab*. Compare this with Lilauli where the majority of the population did not know where the school's "main office" was or what it was called).

The same lack of concern for education was present in Jalalpur as in Lilauli. Everyone expressed approval of the *maktab* and all said that children must know their religion. In practice, some openly contradicted their statements by sending children to the government school. Most did not support the *maktab* in any way except to send their children and pay the nominal fees. Only a few—Zaki, Akhtar and Ghaffur—followed their ideals with action, just as in Lilauli, only more aware villagers like Babu, Chandra, Fayyaz, Riaz and a few others made sure their children attended and learned.

In spite of standards imposed on the *maktab* through Raunaq, there was almost no government influence. The government's concern was mainly the government schools. The *maktab* remained what it was meant to be: a place for imparting Islamic knowledge. It was totally a traditional institution except for a matter of a few registers, one inspection a month and a few ill-managed modern trappings like art, geography and Hindi. Villagers understood its purpose because the *maktab* had definite goals intimately connected to the values of the people in the Muslim *mohalla*. In Jalalpur the teachers were not "men in the middle" like Bhaiya Lal in Lilauli, who remained a villager in government employ commissioned to impose values that the community found unacceptable.

In 1974, on a return visit to Lucknow, I visited Jalalpur and its *maktab*. The same two teachers continued to teach in the mosque; no new building had been erected. Anwar was still supporting his family on Rs. 150. The Muslim community had not gone any further in solving the contradiction between wanting their children to be good Muslims and wanting them to have an education that would lead to a more prosperous life. Neither was there yet any way Jalalpur children could obtain higher education in the Muslim system.

INTRODUCING ST AUGUSTINE'S : A DIFFERENT DAY

Before the bell at 9.30 all the boys in the school are running and standing about the yard. At the bell, all run and form lines in front of the outdoor stage with much noise and confusion. One or two teachers and some upper class proctors try for a little order. The Principal appears above the boys on the stage steps. There is a sudden silence. The teachers are by their classes. A proctor shouts, "Sau-Dhan!" (Attention!).

Brother Joseph begins the morning prayer in English. The boys repeat each word after him. Then they file off two by two to class. The boys from the classrooms furthest down the corridors file off first. It is well-organized.

All classes except Hindi are conducted in English. Teachers and students converse in English. I sit with the class known as 5th English to distinguish it from 5th Hindi across the hall.

Mrs. Chauhan appears. She is the homeroom teacher for 5th English. She is dressed in simple style—in sari like all the women teachers at St. Augustine's. She puts some arithmetic classwork on the board. Then she goes up and down the rows of benches checking homework. Large numbers of boys have not done it.

"What is going to happen to you boys? Oh, you forgot it. Did you also forget to eat your breakfast?"

She gives a long lecture on being quiet. Some of the class are talking during it. One boy is slapped; another sent to the front. James gives a report on how bad the boys were yesterday in Hindi class. (He is the proctor).

A messenger has brought the roll in a giant register. Mrs Chauhan calls the names. Each boy answers, "Present, Miss." Some stand, some half rise, some do nothing but answer.

"Now come to me one by one and show me your work." This activity goes on for some time. A low murmur continues throughout the class. Mrs Chauhan goes among the rows and scolds several boys. One has forgotten to bring his arithmetic copybook. He is given a slap across the face, an ear pull, and left standing.

"Why didn't you forget to bring yourself?"

Mrs Chauhan works out the problems on the board. The class participates in the work. Some are asked personally for answers; some shout out answers in unison. Sometimes she asks in general.

Mrs Chauhan orders the boys to put their fingers on their mouths because there is so much talking. Only about half the class pays attention to her at all.

The bell rings. Mrs Chauhan orders all to stand. "Thank you, Miss," they chorus. She leaves. A dozen boys are up and around.

Young Mrs Kapur enters. All the boys are at attention but the class dissolves into noise in five seconds. She sits down; the boys are wandering about, surrounding her desk. She taps a pencil on the desk for order. James and the other proctor are active but not very effective. Mrs Kapur is in her late twenties. She has little control. She has come to teach English but cannot hold the class for five minutes.

A large fat man comes to the door and asks for Gullu Vohra, one of the smallest boys in the class. Gullu goes to the door and his father hands him his plastic lunch pail.

It is grammar lesson—filling in the blanks out loud. Each boy stands to recite. The teacher has the book and a ruler in her hand. She bangs on a desk once for order. She stands in the aisle and hears the boys in turn. The other boys are murmuring.

The class is large, and she gives individual attention to each boy. The rest are idle. The low murmur makes it hard to hear at the back, but in front, when any boy makes a mistake, several others immediately shout out the answer. When one boy blurts out the answer before the one questioned, the teacher says,

"Let him speak."

Everything is done in English. Mrs Kapur tells the boys to get busy and fill in their workbooks. The boys are noisy. Many go up to ask questions at the teacher's desk, then return to their seats.

"Do your work. Mind your own business!"

A school servant in kurta-pajama comes and collects the roll register. A boy from the adjoining 5th Hindi class enters and borrows the eraser. Mrs Kapur tells him to return it as she needs it. The servant returns. Mrs

Kapur goes out leaving James and the servant in charge. She is having discipline problems as she is new. It is very quiet—due to the servant, a messenger from "on high." Suddenly the Principal comes in. All stand quickly and greet him. He disciplines three boys, hitting them on the palm with his thin stick. One boy is told to get a haircut.

"Old cock, what are you doing in this class?" asks Brother Joseph of one pupil.

Brother Joseph tells the class to be less mischievous, that some teachers have complained of them. Actually the boys are taking advantage of Mrs Kapur's inexperience.

James erases the board. The Principal tells the other proctor to take the names of any boys who misbehave and let him know.

There follows a vocabulary, meaning and spelling lesson punctuated by many scoldings which are of no use.

At the bell, an uproar.

The third period is Physical Training for 5th English. It is held out of doors. The teacher is Mr Chaturvedi, a tall young man in Western clothes. (All male teachers wear Western dress, the Brothers wear cassocks over their Western pants and shirts). He is a member of the National Fitness Corps. He disciplines the lined-up boys severely and well. They perform simple about-faces and similar parade manoeuvres. He freely slaps their faces for mistakes, talking or not listening. Then they do exercises. It is very hot outside. The lines form into two teams for soccer. Twenty-five boys on a side chase the ball around the field in a confusing mob. The two bored goalies stand shuffling their feet.

The fourth period, the class has Mrs Murthi for Hindi. She has the class absolutely quiet. Anyway, many boys are tired from playing soccer. She talks and explains things almost totally in Hindi. All pay attention. She is a strict disciplinarian. She reads and talks, non-stop, not a second is left quiet. She questions the class on the meanings of words.

"Who can tell the meaning of this? What is meant by...?"

A boy reads aloud. There is great disparity in reading ability in Hindi. Some boys already know English better than their mother tongue. For others, neither Hindi nor English is a mother tongue.

Mrs Murthi puts the homework on the board. Each teacher always writes the name of the subject in English on the blackboard, including Mrs Murthi, who writes "Hindi." She makes two columns "Shabd" (word) and "Arth" (meaning), much like Bhaiya Lal's in Lilauli.

Mrs Murthi is a heavyish woman about 28. This class is the quietest of all. It may be her discipline, or it may be that the boys who have trouble in English pay more attention in her class because they can understand.

The boys open their books and read aloud in unison. The bell rings. Time for lunch.

Mrs Kapur takes the fifth period and teaches geography. She asks for the definition of a desert, but is obviously looking for an exact copy of the text. Several boys try to give it, giving good enough definitions, but she refuses them. Everything is supposed to be memorized and given back, word for word. Most of the class cannot give a single answer to her question.

Mrs Kapur is disgusted. But she loses control of the class. They are moving and talking constantly. Almost no one but those in the front row are paying attention. She reads aloud, a new lesson from the geography book, but no one is listening. A boy brings her a handful of spitballs as evidence to accuse his neighbour.

The subject changes to maize.

She goes on, but the boys complain to her, throw spitballs, shift chairs and talk. They are not learning anything. The class is totally out of control. Rakesh, a lively boy with an infectious grin, walks up to Mrs Kapur. "Miss, that boy is calling me." He laughs mischievously.

"Sit down." She tells him.

Two boys caught throwing spitballs are just made to stand by the side of their desks.

The only action she provokes is by saying, "Underline this." Most do it.

The class peters out ingloriously.

Mrs Murthi arrives for sixth period and gets the class into line quickly. She hits several boys with a ruler. One boy mocks her as everyone sits down. She immediately picks him out and whacks him.

Her small son arrives. He is brought each day from his kindergarten by a rickshaw puller. He runs in and stands shyly rubbing the table by his mother after hanging his school bag on the chair.

The class is in Hindi penmanship, called "handwriting." The pupils must copy a page of their text, any page. Mrs Murthi scolds some more and breaks a ruler on a boy's legs.

In correcting she gives examples for the class to copy.

Gullu has thrown some ink. He is made to sit "like a rooster" in the corner in front of the class. Mrs Murthi has taken the names of about a dozen boys who were talking. She gives the list to the second proctor to give to the Principal.

Her son is annoying her, hanging on to her arm when she is trying to write.

The last period is taken by Mrs Alvi. She is a heavy woman in her mid-thirties wearing an orange, pink, and yellow sari. She disciplines several boys but does not hit them.

"Nobody will move. Nobody will talk. You have to write in a good handwriting and without any spelling mistake."

But there is moving and talking. Subhash's ear is twisted and he is sent to stand and work at the front of the room. This is Nature Study class. Mrs Alvi is writing questions and answers on the board concerning the queen wasp. The boys already have diagrams in their notebooks. The teacher explains what she has written, speaking in Hindi mixed with English.

A woman comes to the door and talks with Mrs Alvi for several minutes. The boys get noisier.

This period is 85 per cent copying and 15 per cent listening to the teacher explain what she has written. She tells the boys that for home study they must learn the answers to these two questions, i.e. learn what they have copied from the board.

The boys finish their copying. Mrs Alvi is doing nothing. She sends another boy to the front for fooling around and not doing his work. Subhash returns from exile. She then checks to see that all have done the work.

The final bell rings. All stand. Mrs Chauhan returns. James leads a prayer which seems to be in English but is thoroughly garbled. The boys' hands are together in the Namaste gesture. There is a general charge out the door.

CHAPTER FIVE

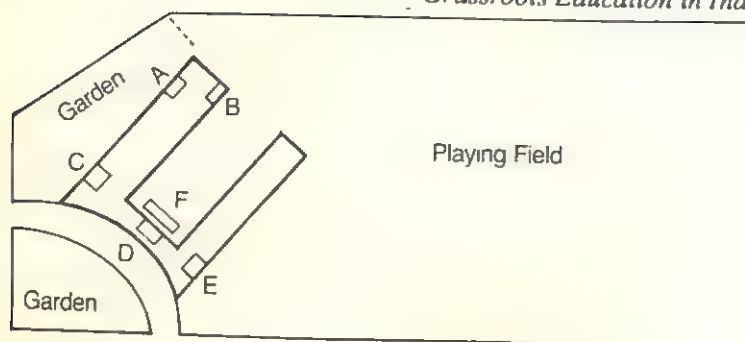
ST AUGUSTINE'S SCHOOL FOR BOYS

St Augustine's was a Western school in most respects. Its layout, routines and organization would have been familiar to a Western visitor. This school therefore provides a control for the first two—a study of an Indian primary school of the urban, Westernizing type.

It was difficult to study the cultural environment of St Augustine's School for Boys. The pupils came from all parts of Lucknow city, though the smaller boys tended to be from nearby neighbourhoods. Many religions, castes and language groups were represented among the students, who came from the middle or upper-middle class. A private, Catholic-run institution, the school did not depend on the support of the government or a particular neighbourhood.

St Augustine's was located in an upper-middle class Lucknow housing "colony" on the north side of the Gumti River about a mile and a half from Hazrat Ganj. Big businessmen and higher professionals lived here in houses with compounds and shade trees. Many houses had cars in their driveways, mostly Indian-made Ambassadors.

The school occupied a two-storeyed pinkish-red-and-white building constructed in a semi-circle. Its two wings were set among well-kept gardens with a large playing field behind. The playing field had two netless soccer goals and a basketball court. A low wall, about a yard high, made of bricks and painted white in alternating sections with the red bricks, surrounded the whole complex. In the front semi-circle, a roofed veranda about six feet wide separated offices from the driveway outside. Above the doors of the several offices hung a number of colour reproductions—Gandhi, Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, the Pope and John F. Kennedy— while a picture of Christ was over the door of the Principal's office. There were several non-descript pictures of scenery at both ends of the corridor. A noticeboard locked inside a glass cupboard stood at one end near some store rooms, the Principal's living quarters and the school office.



- A 5th English classroom
- B Women's staff room
- C Brothers' dining room
- D Principal's office
- E Men's staff room
- F Stage

Figure 5. St Augustine's School, Lucknow

The school had Grades 3 through 10. The older boys trained in the National Cadet Corps, and had a science laboratory and other facilities, which included a 2,000-volume library, equipment for physical education and sports and a large outdoor stage. The school used to have night "functions" twice a year on the stage, but rowdies and hooligans began coming and causing trouble so the occasions were discontinued.

St Augustine's was founded in 1959 and expanded slowly. The city made land available at a rupee per square foot because it was an educational institution. The money came from the Lucknow Catholic diocese and from the order whose Brothers ran the school. The Order had 50 institutions in India, mostly in the South, each with at least four or five Brothers. All Indian novices trained at a school in Tamil Nadu.

The Order had ultimate authority over the school but except for general policy decisions, all specific matters were left up to the local Principal and Brothers, who were expected to conform to local conditions. The Principal, Brother Joseph from Kottayam District in Kerala, was about 30 years old. He finished high school in Kerala and joined the Order in 1956. Then he had three years' religious training followed by teacher's training in 1959-60 and was posted in Sardhana,

Meerut District, for eight years. During that time, he did a BA in English Literature from Meerut College and went to Osmania University in Hyderabad and did a BEd. In 1968, he was transferred to St Augustine's as Principal. In 1969 he received his MA in English Literature from Meerut University. Brother Joseph spoke about his job:

As members of the Order we get only expenses—food, clothing, etc. (They live comfortably with a refrigerator and private rooms). We should not accept things from our families to any extent, though with the Bishop's or Head Brother's permission we may.

There are two roles here. In my lay role I'm the Principal of the school. In the ecclesiastical role I'm the Elder Brother. That means I'm in charge of the other Brothers and in charge of our expenses. There is a three-year term in the ecclesiastical role which is extendable to six or nine years. The Principal role is indefinite. I may be transferred by the Order or kept here. The last head of the school was transferred to Brazil. I'd just as soon not have the responsibility. It's a lot of work. We don't have the ambition of men who work for money. Whether I'm Principal or teacher, it's all the same to me, and I enjoyed teaching better.

The five Brothers, including Brother Joseph, formed the decision-making body of the school. All except the Principal were active teachers. For the most part the Brothers were better educated and more experienced in the world than the lay teachers. Four out of the five came from beyond the borders of Uttar Pradesh (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Goa and Kerala). The 30 lay teachers included both men and women, mostly Hindus. They taught the boys in both English and Hindi. Brother Joseph told me how they were recruited, what conditions they could expect and how he checked on their work.

Brother Joseph: "We [Brothers] advertise in various newspapers, then select the teachers by interview. Sometimes candidates are asked to teach a model lesson. We don't give any exam. Sometimes teachers are hired for one year, as in the case of those replacing teachers on study leave. These teachers are recommended by those who left to study. Usually each teacher is hired for one year first, then if performance is satisfactory, he is ipso facto made permanent. There is no contract. No higher grade of salary is given to those who take higher degrees. [But study leave is granted]. Their grade is fixed at the time of appointment. A BA and BEd means a scale of Rs.150

to Rs.350 and an MA plus MEd is the same. The dearness allowance [D.A] is approximately Rs.76 to Rs 222 per month. Those teachers who are only Inter-trained [12th grade, Certificate of Teaching] get Rs.120-250 and can only teach primary classes. Lady teachers are given less D.A. than men. It's a fixed amount of about Rs.50.

The teacher's performance is rated by exam results and by my checking throughout the day. I make rounds to every class to keep teachers on their toes. I often check the boys' homework myself to see if the teachers have corrected it. There is no panel to do this as in some other schools. I have not appointed anyone to check up on teachers. Indirectly, I ask questions of boys outside the class, like "Can you follow? How do you like the course? etc. Also, some complaints will come from parents if the children are not well taught."

The least educated teachers at St Augustine's had two more years' training than required for new government teachers, not to mention the older government teachers like Bhaiya Lal who usually were only eighth grade graduates. The lowest paid teachers at St Augustine's, if women, still began at Rs. 170 a month, Rs. 23 more than Bhaiya Lal got after 18 years of work.

Besides the teachers and Brothers, eight non-academic staff members worked at St Augustine's, four messenger-servants, a sweeper, a gardener, a night watchman and one librarian-cum-part time clerk. Government contact with St Augustine's was scant, but still two young men did come to teach physical fitness, hygiene and patriotism. They were sent from the National Fitness Corps by the State Government. Their salaries were paid by the state of Uttar Pradesh. With so many problems covering hundreds of villages and a vast urban network, the last thing the District Board worried about was whether such private elite schools were performing properly. The District Inspector of Schools came once in two years. The school was told in advance.

The school had a standard textbook policy since its inception. The books covered similar topics to government textbooks, but fifth grade studies were far more detailed than in the villages. Classroom teachers could decide the speed and material of the courses because examinations were set at St Augustine's by the Principal and teachers together. Only in the ninth and tenth grades was it necessary to prepare for the public examinations of the State Board. The boys in the two highest grades followed a course designed to pass these examinations.

Vacations were from May 20 to June 8, all government gazetted holidays and a week for Christmas. Additional holidays could be granted by the Principal, as in October 1970 when an important cricket match was being played in Lucknow.

St Augustine's School for Boys could more easily decide policy, evaluate teachers or take action than the Lilauli or Jalalpur schools. Its money came from a service-oriented religious organization with no headquarters in Lucknow. Religious duty inspired its administrators to be honest and efficient. The Catholic hierarchy of Lucknow might help financially, but it could not interfere or change things to suit itself. The teachers could be evaluated strictly because they were well-paid by Lucknow standards and were offered considerable facilities in comparison to what government teachers enjoyed. Money decided whether a family could send its sons, because tuition and fees were Rs. 14 a month for Grades 3-8. Parents also had to buy a uniform, books, pencils, paper and the other paraphernalia of schoolboys. Even such fees (worth US \$1.78 a month in 1970) excluded many middle class boys and all below the middle class. Brother Joseph felt that this tuition was high, for he said in a slightly surprised tone, "Even though the tuition is Rs. 14 a month, if there's room for 45 boys, 150 will apply."

Most boys came from homes with monthly incomes of Rs. 300 to Rs. 800 with the weight at the upper end and a number beyond. Because the school was known as one of the best in Lucknow, competition for admission was fierce. The Principal remarked that if boys were admitted from other schools, St Augustine's still examined them to see if they were really fit for the class they had applied for. He noted that many school certificates could not be believed and felt that there were only a few "standard" schools."

By "standard" schools, Brother Joseph meant the other English language, usually Christian-run schools that had (and still have) a near monopoly in India on educating the elite and upper-middle classes. These schools were St Augustine's competitors. St Augustine's, however, prepared boys for the government high school examination, while schools such as St Christopher's and L'Ecole Pasquier prepared pupils for the Cambridge examinations composed in England and administered throughout much of the Commonwealth. Because the Cambridge examinations were more difficult than Indian ones, the programmes at St Christopher's and L'Ecole Pasquier were the most difficult in Lucknow.

These two schools were generally considered to be for Anglo-Indians (Eurasians), but still the majority of students were Hindus. Lucknow Christian College had an English-language school system that prepared pupils for the government examinations. There was also an upper-class "college" which prepared boys for the government high school examination. This school had been founded for the sons of U.P. landowners and was now a school for the sons of wealthy businessmen with tuition of about Rs. 70 a month. All these schools including St Augustine's provided nearly certain entry to top colleges and universities. There was no question as to whether primary class boys would go on or not: it was automatically assumed they would. The contrast with Lilauli and Jalalpur was stunning. About 97 per cent of the boys continued their studies after finishing high school, according to the Principal; but in fact out of the 132 boys who had graduated in 1969, he knew of only one who had discontinued. "Standard" really meant "elite," and parents were well aware of this. They were eager for their children to attend and rise through the grades with good marks. Even though such parents, unlike those in the two village schools, were interested and concerned about their sons' education, they had no organization to influence school matters in any way. In fact, the school was not keen to form one either, as it was felt that the parents would demand expansion to a full twelve-year course. The Brothers did not feel able to cope with this demand and so were happy to limit parental participation to Sports Day and Prize Day. As the situation stood, parents had only the dubious influence of threatening to withdraw their children. This was certainly dubious because of the surplus of applicants. There was no recourse to government and as most parents were Hindu, no recourse to the Catholic Church either. Since most parents would have been delighted to get their boys into a "standard" school, such talk of influence and recourse is largely theoretical anyway.

Unlike the village schools, each class at St Augustine's had its separate room. Teachers were required to teach only one level at a time. The scene was entirely familiar to anyone who went to school in a Western country. Let us contrast this school with the village schools in Lilauli and Jalalpur.

There were 51 boys in 5th English all in the uniform of white shirts, khaki shorts, wide green-and-yellow striped belts, white socks, black shoes and dark green bowties. All sat on wooden benches with half-backs, a low desk in front. Though the benches were built for two boys, a few benches accommodated three.

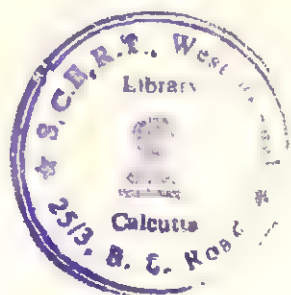
The white-painted room was very sunny and airy with five windows facing the garden outside and five high windows facing into the corridor. A door opened into the corridor. A large fan hung in the centre of the ceiling, its regulator fixed to the wall near the door next to the electric light switch. There was no need for light, so the bulb had been removed. A large blackboard was on the front wall with three shelves on each side, empty except for a few lunch tins. The teacher could sit on a chair and use a large wooden table for a desk. A wastebasket stood by the table. There were no pictures or books in the classroom.

Each pupil carried a canvas or plastic satchel which usually contained a fountain pen, ink bottle, pencils, erasers, notebooks, the small softcover textbooks and often a pencil box.

The lower grades at St Augustine's stayed in their "home room" while teachers for various subjects came and went. There were seven periods from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with half an hour for lunch at 1 p.m. School was held five and a half days a week with Sunday the only free day.

The boys of 5th English were not a homogeneous group like the *maktab* pupils. Even the Lilaqli pupils, though of various castes and two religions, at least lived in the same village. In a class of 47 boys (four were absent) the following differences turned up:

Caste		First Language	
Brahmin	8	Hindi	34
Rajput	6	Punjabi	6
Khatri	5	English	3
Punjabi	9	Bengali	1
Khatri	6	Tamil	1
Arya Samaji	1	Telugu	1
Bania	1	Urdu	1
Unknown	1		
Bania	3		
Kayasth	9		
Maurya	1		
Kavar(Andhra)	1		
Sindhi	1		
Muslim	2		
Christian	2		



Most of the class were either nine or ten years old, but eight boys were eleven or older. The majority lived in the neighbourhood of the school, but nine other neighbourhoods were represented. The upper-middle class background of most boys was obvious. The majority of fathers had good jobs, ten mothers were working and at least 18 mothers had studied beyond high school. (Twenty-three boys could not say how far their mothers had studied). This contrasted with Lilauli, where working women were considered little better than prostitutes, and Jalalpur, where a fifth-grade education for girls was a luxury. Nearly half the boys reported that their parents had been abroad; four boys had themselves been abroad; and 35 boys had been to at least one of the big cities—Delhi, Calcutta, and Bombay. In the villages, no one had ever been abroad and no children had been to the big cities. While all but one village interviewee had bicycles, 37 out of 47 boys at St Augustine's reported their families owned either a car or a motor scooter. Nobody in Lilauli or Jalalpur received a newspaper, and only a few families had radios. Forty-four out of the 47 boys got newspapers at home, and 45 had access to radios. Thirty-one reported that their families received one or more magazines as well.

This survey indicates a different world from the village, a world of more prosperity, Western influence and considerable exposure to the global flow of information. The pupils were not merely lively and mischievous like the village children, but full of curiosity as well. They asked me many questions without shyness. The broader exposure showed in their general knowledge also. A number of the boys in 5th English had a level of knowledge about the world equal or superior to that of most adults in the village, including teachers like Kasim or Sita, who knew nothing of the outside world. Bhaiya Lal in Lilauli felt that God did not want Man to go to the moon and argued that the Americans had faked the whole Apollo II performance. I took a class one day in 5th English and asked what the boys would like me to talk about. "Space" was the answer. I began telling them about the flight of Apollo II. In the middle of my explanation, a boy raised his hand and corrected me. He was right, I was wrong, and there lay a stunning difference between the city elite and the village.

Discipline was almost impossible with more than fifty pupils in a class. Teachers had few available punishments. "Staying after school" was not acceptable, and there were virtually no privileges which could be denied. Just as in the villages, a slap, ear pull or "stand-over-there" were

not effective, because boys so punished still talked, played or drummed on satchels. Certain teachers managed to maintain good discipline by keeping the class busy and showing firmness, but new or younger teachers like Mrs Kapur had a hard time. The final disciplinary measure was always the threat of calling the Principal. However, St Augustine's only managed to maintain such high student-teacher ratios because of the strong family discipline prevalent in all sections of Indian society. If and when that breaks down, the school will be in great trouble.

Children had to address teachers politely. "Yes, Miss" and "No, Miss" were standard answers. (Even though all the class teachers were married women!) Male teachers were addressed as "Sir." Children raised their hands to ask a question. Teachers called each boy by his last name—"Gupta" or "Arora"—and maintained a definite standard of politeness in talking to pupils, as the following example showed:

Mrs Murthi said to a muttering boy in Hindi class, "Zor se parho, be !" ["Read louder, you!"]. *She immediately corrected herself, "Bachche"* [child].

Parents might complain if rough or foul language were used. Certainly the Principal would have been very upset to hear the kind of foul language commonly used by Sita. Though many teachers came from villages, since they were all at least high school graduates, they had dropped earthy expressions in favour of polite urban speech. As for children being insulted by teachers on the basis of caste, such a thing was beyond imagination at St Augustine's. Parents would have raised an outcry that would certainly have reached the newspapers. In any case there were only a few boys from the low castes, because few such families could afford the fees required. I never met a teacher from the low castes at St Augustine's either. Unlike Bhaiya Lal, teachers did not use caste-based abuse to distance themselves from their own "shameful" origins.

Language was a big problem at St Augustine's. Except for Hindi class, everything was in English. Yet boys talked in Hindi among themselves, while English was the language of communication between teacher and pupil. The boys differed widely in English ability. Many chattered fluently, while others could hardly make a sentence. Knowledge of English was the key to elite positions and social prestige. That is why parents placed their children in the English sections, even if their education suffered. The teachers had to waste many hours

explaining the textbooks in simpler terms so all could understand points that would have been easily grasped if presented in Hindi.

The split between the West and India was also reflected in dress. At St Augustine's men and women teachers wore the accepted urban clothes, while Brothers wore the Western-derived cassocks. This meant that women appeared in Indian styles, but among the men, only the servants and other menials were in Indian dress. The boys themselves had to wear the Western uniform. Western dress for men was marked as socially superior, though nothing was said directly.

The teaching techniques used in this urban school resembled Western ones closely. The school was patterned on a general British model, and the teachers trained in Western pedagogical methods. Homework was assigned and unlike Lilauli, classwork corrected and handed back. Though 5th English was a large class, there was still considerable individual attention. Teachers put great emphasis on memorization, as befitted Indian tradition, but one could not find classes chanting out lessons or passages in monotonous repetition. Most often, the teacher lectured on what was in the book, wrote sentences on the board for the boys to copy (they needed to know the correct grammar, spelling and word use in this alien language), then had boys read aloud from the lesson. Answers were expected word-perfect. The teachers could not deviate from the text because the boys could not understand different English vocabulary words. This parrot-like learning process had been a feature of Indian education for centuries and was only exacerbated by the boys' weakness in English. The teachers could not present supplementary material because of the pressure of preparing the boys for the final examinations in a foreign language.

The same suppression of curiosity as described for Lilauli stifled questions from pupil to teacher. I suspected that in most homes, parents did the same thing. Children were never encouraged to ask questions. The only questions ever asked in class were procedural ones—"How do you spell _____, Miss?" "Shall we skip a line here, Miss?"

Between each class there was a short interval in which the boys could move or talk. They had a 15 minute free period in the morning and several physical education periods during the week. This routine seemed much easier for nine and ten year olds than the village system of continuous study. The boys played during their half-hour lunch period too.

The Teachers of St Augustine's

The teachers, like the students, came from varied backgrounds. The entire teaching staff numbered thirty, of whom six came into daily contact with the 5th English class. Two of them were young men, Mr Chaturvedi and Mr Shukla, both Brahmins. Tall, thin, and gangling, Chaturvedi was 28 years old. He said:

My father was a zamindar in District Gorakhpur in eastern U.P. He died long ago and I married early. Early marriage is the curse of India. At St Augustine's my job is to be a Physical Education organizer, to arrange functions, supervise examinations and to encourage national pride through such things as saluting the flag. Brother Joseph gives me more cooperation in my work than my own colleagues. I could be transferred, but if my work is all right—no one has complained—I will stay here.

He had been at St Augustine's four years already. Chaturvedi had an MA in English Literature and was doing another in Sociology from Lucknow University. He hoped to get at least 55 per cent marks so that he might go on for a Ph D.

I plan to go into politics in Indira Gandhi's party as I have connections to the Party President and my uncle is a U.P. Minister. See, I'm wearing homespun pants. (Homespun clothes are the sign of Congress party politicians). By 1977, I hope I'll be running for MLA (State Legislator).

5th English had women teachers most of the time. Mrs Alvi, who taught science and nature study, was a Shia Muslim of 35. Her husband, an inventor and a direct descendant of the last Nawab of Avadh, had an MA and an LL. B from Lucknow University. Because of its princely connection, the family still was receiving a monthly income from the government in 1970. The Alvis lived in a comfortable pink house in a quiet residential area within walking distance of St Augustine's. Mrs Alvi's family, too, were of old Lakhnavi stock, living in the heart of the Muslim bazaar. Mrs Alvi was very shy, perhaps because she was the least educated of the four female 5th English teachers. She finished Inter-College (12th grade) and then did an Intermediate Teacher's Certificate. She taught in a girls' school from 1956 to 1958, then joined St Augustine's as one of the three original teachers in 1959. There were 45 boys in the whole school then. She liked her job and did not mention any problems,

but admitted difficulties with language and discipline. Like the other women teachers, Mrs Alvi had no plans to "advance" further. Her salary in 1970 was Rs.260 a month which included the yearly increment for ten years. The scale allowed her to reach a final salary of a little over Rs. 300 monthly.

Mrs Murthi, very strict and stern in class, seemed much younger outside and laughed often and pleasantly when she talked. She came from a Lucknow family and had an MA in Hindi Literature from Lucknow University as well as an M Ed. Her husband was a Tamilian from Bangalore in south India. He graduated from Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan University in Indian classical dance (Bharat Natyam) and was currently the dance instructor at a girls' convent school in Lucknow. The Murthis had three children, one of whom was the small boy who came to 5th English every afternoon. Said Mrs Murthi, "Our children are just Indians, nothing else" (i.e. of no specific regional group). Mrs Murthi's 29 hours of class a week was typical of the extremely heavy loads by Western standards endured by St Augustine's teachers. Her subjects were Hindi, morals and debate. Besides teaching, there were papers and notebooks to correct and 5th English had an examination every Monday. This meant that in each subject there was an examination once every five to six weeks. Mrs Murthi had to fill out progress reports six times a year. Each home-room teacher did this for her own class, filling in grades, comments, rank in class and attendance for approximately 50 pupils. The boys took these printed yellow cards (in English) home to their parents and brought them back signed. If they lost the forms it cost them two rupees. Mrs Murthi had to submit a lesson plan for each week to Brother Joseph who checked and signed it. A lesson plan took her 40-50 minutes to prepare. There are no extra-curricular activities in the school except some semi-organised sports, so at least she was not involved there as well. With all this teaching, report and form-filling and lesson plan submission, it was not surprising that teachers stuck very closely to assigned texts even if they wanted to do something more original. The previous Principal used to sit in classes and ask the teacher to "carry on." Mrs Murthi expressed relief that Brother Joseph did not do this. She had been at St Augustine's since 1961 and had never taught anywhere else. She liked the job and felt she was doing something useful. "It's better than staying home, idle," she smiled.

Mrs Chauhan, 40ish, with graying hair and a peppery temperament, had been at St Augustine's since 1964. She liked her job as arithmetic and

home-room teacher for 5th English. Her ancestral home was in District Mathura of western U.P., but she grew up in Delhi. She studied there, starting but not completing her BA. Mrs Chauhan then took her Teaching Certificate and taught first in Delhi, leaving that job when she married and came to Lucknow. Her husband was a Lucknow University graduate and head of the Family Planning Programme in Lucknow. They lived with the husband's family, plus two children of their own, 8 and 5, who had an ayah to take care of them. She said:

"It's easier to hire teachers than servants. If there is a teaching job you can have ten teachers, but you have to hunt for a servant."

A friend of hers went to settle in America with her husband. Mrs Chauhan has heard much about the ease of life there. "Here we work long and hard and still can't afford any luxuries at all. One cannot think of a car."

But she is thinking of one.

The contrast with any of the village teachers was stark.

Mrs Kapur, in her late 20's, hailed from Gurgaon in Haryana state. She had been at St Augustine's only two weeks. She got the job after an application, an interview and especially a recommendation from her friend, who resigned as a teacher to go on for further studies. She had an MA in Hindi from the elite Miranda House women's college of Delhi University. Mrs Kapur was untrained in teaching and had never taught before. She taught History, Geography and English to 5th English. We talked at length about her serious discipline problems, and she frankly asked what she should do. Her husband was an M.Sc. in Geology from Lucknow University. He received specialized training in Calcutta and was currently working for the Geological Survey of India, travelling often to Ladakh and the border hills areas. He could be transferred at any time, so Mrs Kapur might not remain long at St Augustine's. The Kapurs had been married six years and had one school-age child.

The majority of the teachers at St Augustine's were men. They were mostly from the middle or lower-middle class, but of upper castes. I met about 15 men teachers in all. Of these, there were 5 Brahmins, 3 Kayasths, 2 Rajputs, 2 Christians, and 2 Muslims. Their backgrounds were similar, either from the hard-pressed urban lower-middle class or from upper-caste village families. The social division between pupils and male

teachers was thus very striking. The lower-middle class/educated village teachers instructed mostly upper-middle class pupils. The pupils in higher grades often knew English better than their teachers and had access to facilities unavailable to the teachers. The women teachers, on the other hand, were mostly wives of upper-middle class men and worked for extra income and "something to do".

At St Augustine's, sex and social differences were emphasized by the location of staff rooms. The men and women teachers had separate staff rooms (not including toilets) located at opposite ends of the building. No teacher ever entered the staff room of the opposite sex. Indian tradition was well-observed in this respect, as the following example shows:

Mr. Mishra was looking for some ink between periods. He came into the 5th English classroom and sent James, the proctor, into the nearby women's staff room to ask for it. He would not enter or even knock on the door himself.

In contrast to the teachers with their families and commuting life, the five Brothers were residents of the school, each with his own simple but pleasant room. Just as the women and men teachers had separate facilities, so did the Brothers separate themselves from the other men. Their staff room was their dining room, with a refrigerator and table with set places. It was large, neat and cool compared with the bare and rather rude men's staff room. Male teachers addressed Brothers respectfully and kept a distance. Women teachers dealt only with Brother Joseph. The Brothers moved in a different world.

Brother Ramalingam, a big, good-looking young man in his late twenties or early thirties, had an MA in Physics and was doing a B Ed in Lucknow University. Ramalingam had one brother, a chemical engineer working for a large Indian corporation, who planned to go to a top American University in 1971, and a sister who was currently doing her BA. From a Tamil family resident in Hyderabad, Brother Ramalingam's father was a famous chemist and professor who received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1949. He became a professor at the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute and had his picture taken with Bertrand Russell. In 1955, he was killed in an automobile crash in New Mexico. The funeral was held in St Patrick's Cathedral in New York. Ramalingam joined the Order in 1960 and had three years' training in Tamil Nadu. He taught there for a while and then was transferred to Lucknow. He had travelled all over India and

had many photographs of himself, family and friends in various famous spots. The family home in Hyderabad was palatial; they must have been very rich. Ramalingam said he might get a chance to go abroad for further studies. He spoke excellent English, also Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Hindi, Urdu, Marathi and French. He played the guitar, organ, piano and harmonium, and had a guitar in his room. Ramalingam told me he liked Western classical music, especially Schubert, and Indian popular music. The comparison with village teachers like Bhaiya Lal or Anwar was striking.

Brother Joseph was usually found in the Principal's office. He had a telephone, a glass bookcase with a few biology and zoology books inside and a wall crucifix garlanded with coloured paper. A calendar picture of the Taj Mahal hung on the wall. The Principal, a short, thick-set man, very dark with a square face, large teeth and square black-rimmed glasses, immediately impressed me as an intelligent and compassionate man. He had a very deliberate manner of speaking in English or Hindi and seldom raised his voice. Unlike the village teachers, he never ignored any boy's question. Each morning before classes and each afternoon when school finished, the Principal's office would be flooded by boys with various requests. Mornings, Brother Joseph was busy initialling small blue-covered notebooks in which he approved the boys' absence and tardy notes. He might also certify that the boy had permission to be without a certain item of the school uniform that day. Otherwise the pupil would be pulled out of line at morning assembly by an upper-grade proctor and given some punishment. At the end of the day, boys entered the Principal's office to register their names for some external examination, to ask to be excused from one thing or another or to beg for another chance at a test. Competition for good marks was high. I was amazed to see one small boy in tears, asking to be allowed to finish an examination. No village children were ever so tense about a mere examination.

In fact, this small scene could serve as a metaphor emphasizing the difference in the level of informed concern about education between St Augustine's and the village schools. In Lilauli there was little concern about education and less about the quality of education. In Jalalpur, many Muslims were concerned that their children should get an Islamic education, but they had no idea about the quality of education in the *maktab*. In this way, as in so many other ways, St Augustine's school differed from the other two. It served a different kind of community in which parents had much more well-defined and specific expectations of

the school than their village counterparts. The parents of St Augustine's boys were educated professionals, administrators or businessmen who knew what they wanted schooling to achieve. They watched their sons' progress carefully and insisted on the standard necessary to obtain entry into university and so into lucrative careers. They managed to pass their concern on to their children, who soon learned that they were students in one of the best schools in Lucknow. They learned to have high expectations and to fear failure.

The teachers inhabited a different world from Lilauli or Jalalpur. They had travelled; they had been exposed to "modern life" and most of them considered themselves part of that life. None were from the low castes. The pupils were separated from their Lilauli and Jalalpur contemporaries by an even greater gulf, both in terms of their present and their future. The boys at St Augustine's could expect to continue beyond high school to university and eventually take eminent positions in the spheres of administration, industry, commerce, the military or the professions. Unemployment was only a distant threat or, at worst, a temporary annoyance one experienced before connections, fluency in English and the "right sort of background" secured a good job. The importance of all these differences will be taken up in the next chapters.

CHAPTER SIX

PERCEPTIONS

*"My children should fly in airplanes,
but how can they get there?
Education is a great thing."*

—Ibrahim.

Babu, the big landowner in Lilauli, was born in Kanpur and lived his early years there. Though he finished the sixth grade at a school in Lucknow, he failed the exam. His wife, having completed the fifth grade, was one of the most highly educated women of her generation in the village. Babu was the most powerful man in Lilauli in both traditional and modern terms. He was *sarpanch* of the Panchyat Adalat, he owned the most land, he could produce magnificent spectacles at his children's marriages and he could offer largesse to anyone he chose. It was not surprising, therefore, that Babu had the most influence on the school. Without him there would have been no school.

In the late 1950s, when the Blocks were set up under the Five Year Plan to foster development, one of the main aims was to build schools in all the villages. Any village could request the Block to help build a school. The District Board would contribute Rs. 2,500 toward the building, and the village had to put up whatever else was necessary. In Lilauli the request was made through the Panchayat by those who were educated and aware of the need for education. Since there were extremely few schools in the vicinity, the number of educated people was very small. Even those who could barely read and write were few. After receiving the request, the government gave the requisite Rs. 2,500, but without Babu's outright donation of the land, the money would not have been sufficient. The plot he gave was estimated to be worth Rs. 1,000. Villagers often emphasised that if it were not for Babu, there would not have been a school in Lilauli. A certain amount was raised by a school tax on everyone, by donations and subscriptions and by *shramdan* (voluntary labour). A few people gave

small sums, and some Harijans donated labour to erect the actual building. Again, when difficulties arose, Babu came to the rescue by donating all the bricks, some 10-15,000 of them, worth a small fortune by village standards. The school was completed in 1961.

Babu, the innovator and chief sponsor of Lilauli's school, had firm views on education. He obviously felt school to be separate from the business of farming, not an intrinsic part of it. He remarked:

Education is very necessary. It's a very good thing. No subjects are useless, all are important. Even geography, as children should understand how big the world is. English should be taught from the beginning because when the children reach high school they fail for lack of English. It's necessary for them to be able to speak English to get jobs or to make a good marriage. It's very wrong that English is not taught in the village. They do teach it in the city.

Other than this, Babu shared the opinions of most villagers about education except that he was among those who felt that modern village education was far superior to the harsher variety in the old days. He felt that Lilauli's school would be better if it had more dedicated teachers, but that there was little anyone could do about it. Some of his statements mirrored practices and events in the school:

I don't mind if the teachers beat the children for not studying, but it's natural for small kids to play around at school. So, the teacher shouldn't hit them for that.

I often go by the school and look in on what's happening. I think the school here is good in comparison to other village schools. Bhaiya Lal teaches well—he doesn't know English but otherwise he teaches well. His word has some influence. He tells the children to study. They do it. Also if some children are roaming about, then he tells their parents to send them to school and they do it. People respect him because he's the master. Sita? (Shakes head), She's in teaching—but when she's not educated then what can she teach?

The children are unable to talk to people without education. They don't have the courage without education. In the days of the English, people used to see the sahibs coming and run. There weren't any schools in those days. Perhaps if we didn't have any education we wouldn't have the courage to be with you. In British days, they never knew what to say in front of educated people.

The last statement was universal in Lilauli. As well as the village big man, everyone expressed similar sentiments. But even among the village leaders there were differences in attitude. Riaz Khan, young and aggressively concerned with change, was very strong in his opinion that education should be more practical. He had succeeded in agriculture while still in his 20s and knew that such success was within the grasp of many village youths. He felt English was unnecessary for endeavours like his. Riaz was virtually the only villager who saw that the teachers attendance was not the only problem in Lilauli's school. He commented:

I only studied up to the fifth grade. Twice I lost a year because I was sick, then finally I went to stay with my mother's people in Bara Banki and never started school again. Now I regret it, but it's too late. My father has a third grade education, but my mother and wife are both illiterate. Every child in India should get education. Still, there's one trouble with that. When village children get a little education then their parents think they should get a white-collar job and not do agricultural work. It's a big problem. They never want to farm any more. If educated people farmed, things would improve a lot, but here the belief is that whoever is uneducated, farms. Education isn't apart from the village. We make it apart.

As far as our school goes, I think Bhaiya Lal is a better teacher than most. Still, even he could teach better if he put in more work. He has the knowledge. Nothing happens in the village by his say-so though. He's all right in school but he has nothing to do with the village. People respect him as a masterji, and then, his elder brother taught so many people in the village. Bhaiya Lal is a government man. He works for the government, but whatever respect he gets is because he lives close by.

Sita? Hah! Absolutely useless. Also you know what they say about her. She's a bad woman with no honour. It would be very difficult to get rid of her.

What's good about our school? It's like the rest of them. It doesn't go right. They don't teach practical agriculture in the field any more. That was a good thing. They used to have it in the time of Mohan Lal, but now Bhaiya Lal's stopped it.

The education in the old days was better. The masters used to teach with more interest. The maulvi would teach the children very well;

now the teachers don't take interest. The masters were better trained then too. They possessed teaching knowledge and methods. Nowadays, they aren't trained. You see yourself what it's like. Sita is untrained herself and she's teaching.

The predominant fact of Lilauli's economic life in 1970 was that the vast majority of villagers still worked on the land, as farmers or as labourers. However, more and more men (and one woman) were taking jobs outside the village. Most men working outside were with the Railway in various skilled and unskilled blue-collar jobs. The agricultural changes that had altered village life in the 1960s lay behind the change in employment patterns too. Only a few families had enough land to make use of the new "Green Revolution" techniques, even though 35 per cent of the families had some land. Ahirs owned 78 per cent of all the land, and most of the large plots were in their hands. The 65 per cent of the families who had no significant holdings, or none at all, traditionally worked as labourers. These were mainly Harijans and Muslims. With increasing use of machines for irrigation, threshing and other tasks, labourers were finding a shortage of work. Because Lilauli is within easy cycling distance of the city and many new factories, the situation was not grim. In fact, by 1982, Lilauli was more prosperous than before as a result of the income from urban jobs in addition to non-monetary benefits such as vegetables grown in kitchen gardens, mangoes from neighbours or milk from one's own cow. Since villagers increasingly had to seek work outside the village, more interest and stress on education seemed a reasonable prediction. But education remained a peripheral matter. Few villagers determinedly sent their children to the school so that they could become more qualified earners of higher pay in the city.

Education was still a relatively new phenomenon in Lilauli in 1970. Before 1961, a few boys from families who did not need their labour had been to Baburi to study. One or two Harijans went to a school held under a tree near Rabbi Khara. Conditions there were bad and few children ever continued for very long. Before World War II, there were only two or three literates in the entire village. In 1961, the Block statistics show 16.2 per cent literacy in Lilauli. The figure was probably double that in 1970 but still less than 50 per cent in 1982.

As Ahirs were numerically and economically dominant in Lilauli, they dominated the school too. In March 1970, there were 91 pupils registered.

<i>Caste</i>	<i>Number of Children</i>	<i>Percentage of Registered Children</i>
Ahir	48	53
Muslim	18	20
Pasi	14	15
Kori	3	3
Nai	1	1
Matarpur hamlet of Qadirabad village	7 (4 Lodh, 2 Kayasth, 1 Pasi).	8

The significant figures are for Muslims and Harijans. The social superiority and importance of the Muslims, despite their numerical inferiority is underlined. The Ahir population percentage and school attending percentage were almost identical. The Muslims totalled 12 per cent of the village and 20 per cent of those in school. The Kori/Pasi were 31 per cent of the village and only 18 per cent of the school population. Though 91 pupils were registered, no more than 45 ever attended. If the first grade, where most of the "paper" pupils were enrolled, is discarded, the figures are even more revealing. Of 51 students in grades 2-5, the percentages are:

	<i>Percentages of grade 2-5</i>	<i>Percentage in village</i>
Ahir	61	56
Muslim	20	12
Kori/Pasi	12	31
Nai	1	1
Matarpur	6	-

The figures again reflect the social inferiority of the Harijans and the clear dominance of the Ahirs. The Muslims were land-poor and so sought proportionately more jobs in the urban area. Even as the village changed more drastically in the 1970s and early 1980s, the proportion of Harijan children in school did not rise. The Muslims and Ahirs continued to be predominant.

In the light of these facts on caste, land holdings and school enrolments, the opinions of various villagers may be better understood. Hira Lal lived next door to Babu in the older Ahir section of the village. He was about 41 in 1970, a thin man with luxuriant black moustaches

drooping slightly over the corners of his mouth. Because he inherited only three and a half bighas, Hira Lal had to work with the Railway in the locomotive repair shop. When I interviewed him one May afternoon, he was sitting on an empty bullock cart on a threshing floor under the mango trees, drying straw that had become wet in the previous night's dust storm and rain. From time to time, his younger son, Chandu, would come and take a large headload of straw to the village. Hira Lal's wife and brother's daughter were also working around us. Chandra's small son, Ramu, and younger daughter were also there. The day had been cooled by the *puruwa*, the east wind, and the golden glow of late afternoon was slowly subsiding. A small black calf roamed happily under the trees, eating its fill. Hira Lal had brought it from home. The drying straw spread yellow on the dry, grey earth; evening slowly turned it gold, then faded beige. Crows and parrots made a racket in the spreading mango trees while *koel* birds echoed their poing-ing notes around the orchard. From far off in Qadirabad village, came the "clok-clok" of a power grain mill. Hira Lal had this to say about education:

I studied up to the fourth grade in Baburi, then my father started losing his eyesight. So I had to look after the fields and quit school. My father studied up to the chaharum (4th class, old style). My father and Riaz' uncle were the only educated men in the village and did all the "literary" work. My father had very much education for the time. Poor people couldn't study and the school was so far away.

My elder son is an 11th grade pass; then he had three years training. Now he has a post as a pharmacist's assistant in Lucknow. Chandu, the younger son, is in the 11th grade now. Both studied here in the Lilauli primary school.

RSN: What about Chandu's further education?

HL: Here he is; ask him yourself.

RSN: You're the father, you know more.

HL: Nowadays boys know more than their fathers. I hope Chandu will get a job somewhere. Perhaps I'll enroll him in the military. Nowadays the kids can't take it as they could in the old days. It's not their fault; it's the changing times. He can't go into farming; it's too hard and then, what can you do on three and a half bighas anyway? Wherever he could get a job is OK. What should I say?

By 1982, Chandu had completed an LL.B. in Lucknow and was trying to practice law without much success. He was the only tertiary graduate in Lilauli between 1974 and 1982. Hira Lal, like other villagers, did not have a high opinion of the teacher's status. He merely said:

Bhaiya Lal tells people to send their children to school and they obey. He says that when they have a school here and when he is coming here every day, people should take advantage of this and send their kids. People respect him, he's the teacher. I'll tell you something. One day Bhaiya Lal beat Jamuna's son. Jamuna came to school when his son arrived home crying. Many villagers gathered around to see the spectacle. Jamuna made a big fuss and argued with Bhaiya Lal. He shouldn't have come in front of the students. He should have waited until later, greeted him properly and then said, "Don't beat the children so often." We were beaten so much we pissed in our dhotis. Now other kids will complain to their parents—how can one make them study?

I'm satisfied with the education here. No complaints. The advantage of the school is that the little children can study right here. They don't have to go far. Otherwise there would be no supervision on the way to school. They would fight and quarrel. One should send the children to school to learn about the world, to learn how to read and how to get along with others, talking and sitting. I benefited from my education. I can read letters or documents like those related to farming, court, or the tehsil.

These days the children are always in sight of their parents. They have it very easy. Get up, eat, and they're in school in two minutes. They used to have to go running two, three, four miles, stay there all day and come home tired and often beaten. (He was talking of his own schooling in Baburi). In those days they didn't pay much attention to the students; they never told them the use of things—how education would benefit them.

You know in the old days if a British platoon was walking along the road over there, everyone, from old men to children, would run to the village and shut themselves up in their houses. The same would happen when the District Inspector, sub-inspector, sergeant, or constable of police appeared. Everyone was afraid to talk with them. Never mind the one they were after, he'd run for miles! Now it's all changed. People come out and greet you, they're not afraid of

foreigners or government officials. They're ready to argue with the police. They know not to be afraid. See, even little children talk to you, an American, and shout, "Jai Ram ji ki!" This is all due to education in my opinion. With education, people are not afraid anymore. You can see the difference between educated and uneducated men. The uneducated one will see you coming, laugh and turn away. He'll go to tell his friends, "Hey, I saw a strange white, white man coming. I left in a hurry." The educated one will shake hands, invite you to sit down, ask about refreshments and so on. Education teaches you to get along with all.

Next, let us turn to the group of illiterate Ahir farmers still prominent in 1970, but shrinking in numbers by 1982.

Nannua was a tall, extremely emaciated farmer with a slight gray touch to his hair and stubble. He wore only a dhoti. He was 45 years old, married with five children. Some of the villagers, like Chandra, called him "Chaudhari" (an exaggerated title) in fun. He was silent and retiring yet had a mischievous smile which sometimes appeared before he asked a lightly joking question or gave a sly answer. He had a small village-style shop and about six bighas of land. His father worked in the Railway but he did not. As an illiterate, Nannua was slow to innovate, always worried that he would be fooled. By 1970 he used some chemical fertiliser, but otherwise had not changed his farming practices. He had never seen a film, rather astonishing for India in 1970. Two of his sons studied up to the 7th grade but three other children remained illiterate like their parents and grandparents. Nannua was not at all used to being asked for his opinions; he deferred to the educated villagers on all matters outside his household. His comments reflect opinions commonly offered by illiterate men and the few women I could talk to.

RSN: What would you like your children to be?

N: It is all up to Him.

RSN: If one of your sons became a primary school teacher what would you think?

N: I would not think anything. It is all up to God. Whatever happens, will happen. I have never been to the school to talk with the teachers (though he passes by each day) I could not tell you what subjects are important to study or if Bhaiya Lal teaches well. I have no idea.

Bhaiya Lal is teaching the children. He is literate. So we listen to him. He gives advice about repairs to the school, the sending of children to school. People respect him; he does his full duty. Bahin-ji ("Sister" means Sita) does not. She hardly comes and no one knows why. Bhaiya Lal is a government man. I think the money the government gives for the Bahin-ji and the servant is totally wasted. The servant is supposed to give water to the children and clean the school and drinking pots. The pots remain dirty for a year on end. She does not do anything—sends the kids home to drink water.

I don't know where the school's main office is. Children should go to school so they will learn. If they don't go, who will teach them at home?

Poorer illiterate Muslims had a different approach to education because they looked back to the days of Islamic glory and felt the world to be cheapened since then. Ibrahim was a thin, long-headed, hollow-checked man about 5 feet, 7 inches tall with close-cropped hair and broken pan-stained teeth. One of the poorest Muslims in the village, he often gleaned short grass from other villagers' land with a soil-loosening tool to feed to his one cow. He was 35, married with three children. He used to live in another village closer to the city but moved to Lilauli about 1964 to live close to his wife's family. Since he had no land, Ibrahim worked for the Railway like so many others in the village.

The worst thing in India is the lack of money. I'm making Rs. 200-250 a month in the Railway but I don't have any land, as I told you. So everything has to be done in the house itself—I don't even have a field to shit in (the common village practice). The lack of money is the cause of all troubles. You don't have money, then how can your mind look forward to other things—develop? My children should fly in airplanes but how can they get there? Education is a great thing. They must get education.

I want my children to pass the 12th class and then they'll get work somewhere. If they don't study, they're idiots and they'll have a lot of trouble. When you don't have money then there's no use for the mind. You can't use your knowledge. So I think becoming a primary school teacher would be a great source of income. Still, it would be best if they learned some work from which they could get more money than that.

I'm illiterate; that's my trouble. If I'd studied I'd have a big salary by now. My father and mother were illiterate and my wife is too. My children are all studying.

I've never been to see the school or the teachers. Yes, the teacher teaches well. [He has no idea]. Nothing happens here on his say-so. He teaches the children and gives them manners so the villagers respect him. He's a government man and lives in Baburi. The lady-teacher teaches all right, but she comes very little. She's absent too much. If there is any problem to discuss I wouldn't go to see the teachers. I'd see one of the big men.

Ibrahim does not know where the school's head office is, nor can he compare the Lilauli school with those in other villages, but he has a very strong opinion, not developed from personal experience, about the superiority of the old style Muslim education.

The maulvis used to teach children about Islam. Nowadays they teach the children this "Ram-Rahim" so kids don't learn about their own religion. Only this "bhajan-wali" [Hindu hymn-singing] education. One of my boys does study Urdu at home. He's studying Urdu because he'll learn the things to do and not to do. Not to tell lies. He'll learn his culture. My sister-in-law teaches him.

Four or five boys of about 13 years were hanging about Ibrahim and me. They poked each other and giggled. I tried to get them to leave but they would not.

In the old days the 4th grade produced good results. Now even the 8th is not very good. There wasn't anything wrong with education in those days. Now, children don't know the correct pronunciation of Urdu. See my 80-90 year-old grandfather. How clearly he talks! If I had an education, perhaps I would speak like him. The present education produces loafers and lack of discipline. See how these kids are bothering you. You tell them ten times to leave but they don't. In the old days, once would have been enough.

The majority of illiterate men in Lilauli were Harijans. By 1982, most Ahirs and many Muslims could read and write, but Harijans of both sexes remained unlettered. They had no idea what went on in the school, nor did they feel compelled to send their children. Only a few Pasí or Kori children had gone to Lilauli's primary school. As a result, most questions

about education were irrelevant to adult Harijans. In fact, the experience of being interviewed was too much for most of them. Pachchu was typical of this group, the most strongly traditional in the village.

At 90, Pachchu was the oldest man in the village. He was a little deaf and did not understand standard Hindustani very well, talking always in the Avadhi dialect. Asked for his opinions by a foreigner, he reacted by asking for a job for his grandson and made it plain that he and his family were at my personal command. This fits entirely with the experiences of his past 90 years. Never mind my odd queries, what was meaningful was that I paid attention to him and his house. He was delighted with this "great fortune" and after that always rose to his feet and greeted me with deference when I passed by. Pachchu was a farmer and former night watchman for Babu's family. His views on education were sketchy.

I'm illiterate. In those days there weren't any schools and those there were only taught English. My son isn't educated either. My grandson has studied up to the 8th grade; through the 5th in Jalalpur, up to the 8th in Baburi. Then he quit and began farming. In those days all were illiterate. What do I know what education would have done for me? I can't say.

I don't have a radio or ever listen to one. I've never seen a movie. I used to go to the city every day when I was in service. I went on foot. In those days only big people had cycles.

In the old days there was labour to do. Things were cheaper then. The English used to be here. If they broke a few cane stalks they'd pay Rs.5 or 10. Now they're not here. That's the main difference between then and now. What else? Talks of prices. Before I was happy, now I'm not any more.

Hari Chand was a thin, white-haired Ahir of over 50 from the middle range of villagers. He worked in Kanpur as a messenger in a factory and came to see his wife and sons infrequently. He was born in Amiyaganj, another Block in Lucknow District, and lived in Lilauli, his wife's birthplace. His eldest son had failed the 8th grade examination. The second son was an 8th grader at Baburi at the time of interview.

There was a school there in my village in Amiyaganj. It went up to the 10th class but after I'd reached the 8th grade my father said he couldn't afford to send me any more. So I left. We had two

masters, one a Murao, one a Thakur. They used to move the school from place to place around the village because there wasn't any fixed site. They took fees from each student. They'd even take a bag of wheat if a boy had no money. They came every day and encouraged the pupils to keep studying because otherwise they wouldn't get their money. The school was like this for five years, then the government people came and started sending the inspector to see how the teachers taught and if the pupils were attending. It became a regular government school and a building was arranged.

I never learned English. I mean, what's the use? They used to tell us, "Say, 'Good morning' Sir". but I've always thought that "Ram Ram" is just as good. Why not? My own education helped me in that I can mix with people. I'm not afraid to talk and meet with people. Otherwise it hasn't helped me.

In the old days the masters used to guide the children's hand to teach writing. They sat in the middle of the pupils and taught very carefully. Nowadays they don't pay attention. They shout from a distance, "Hey! Write the letters on your slate. Write the numbers!" And they never check to see if the children have done as they ordered. The children are playing or talking. If I ask my kids to give the answer to any problem, they can't do it. Education is becoming useless. We learned our ka-kha-ga-gha, then we'd learn which station came after which if you go by railway around India. We'd have to go to the board and point out the towns on the map. The master was sitting there with a stick. If you didn't point out the place accurately—Karaak!—you got it. Still, in those days they didn't beat the pupils much really. You had to repeat something over and over if you got it wrong. Standing in the corner saying, "Ka ka ka ka".

Jalil Ahmed, a 52 year old Muslim ex-policeman, was nostalgic for the old days when the British ruled and Urdu had an honoured position.

In the old days, education was better. Nowadays it's too free, there's not enough beating. If you come to school you come, if not, no problem. And even the teachers don't come on time any more. Parents don't bother to send their children. I used to bring my kids to school in a sack if they didn't go! In the old days, after the 5th grade, children could write a good letter. Now even after the 8th, they can't write a proper letter.

RSN: Do you think the old education was worse than the present kind in any respect?

JA: No! Very emphatic No, no!

Banki Lal, 40, an Ahir farmer and mango seller, was vice-pradhan of the village Panchayat, but could barely read and write. He had a considerable amount of land and participated wholeheartedly in the agricultural changes of the late 1960s, but remained a follower, not a leader, a fact of which he was very aware.

My father died when I was small so I never even saw what a school looked like. I was caught up in struggle for daily bread. Later, I was involved in a factional quarrel and went to jail for six months. I studied the first reader there.

Nowadays schools are everywhere, but in those days there were very few. These days any little or poor man can be a teacher, but in the old days only great, learned men taught. The teachers used to have a lot of knowledge, now anyone who has studied a little can be a teacher.

It's very important to become literate. If you're a farmer you can get along much better then. In fact, without education you can't do anything in agriculture. I am unschooled so I always have to take advice from Babu and Chandra.

Though I was unable to interview women, I suspect that their illiteracy would lead the majority to hold similar views to the most traditional men.

Since a school and primary education had been in Lilauli for a number of years, it was interesting to make a summary of what villagers felt it had done and how it compared to older forms of education (whether or not they had actually seen such forms). Everyone said that education gave the children confidence. Other than that, opinion was divided. Many people had an ideal image of a *guru* or *maulvi* in their minds. Seeing that the paid, low-caste teachers were not remotely like these traditional religious figures, people expressed their dismay or disillusion with current education. Many were only being idealistic or repeating what they had heard, because *gurus* or *maulvis* were not part of Lilauli's experience in living memory.

Some villagers felt modern education would lead to better agricultural practice or jobs in the city. Others, and their number had increased dramatically by 1982, felt that village primary education was slack, poorly organized and would not lead anywhere. They contrasted children's abilities in the past with those of the day and found modern children lacking. Most people in Lilauli still did not know enough about what schools could or should do. This group included all the mothers. Parents in the village had no influence on school curriculum at all, though their culture dominated the way children and teachers behaved.

The school was run by urban men in offices in Lucknow, but its clientele was rural. The curriculum was set by urban men and modelled on Western curriculum. Lilauli had no say in what its children learned. Some villagers with land would have liked to see more agriculture taught in schools. Others felt that they themselves could teach the children what was necessary to know about farming, but English was important. Landless or land-poor villagers wanted education for their children so that they could get urban or industrial jobs. They too thought English was necessary for this. In 1980 English was promised for the primary schools, pleasing many parents, but it was not introduced. Though villagers may have believed that Sita was spoiling their children's future and not performing adequately, they did not report her. Some did not know how to complain or where to complain; others waited for the higher-status villagers to act. No one felt concerned or confident enough to get involved with an urban-run organisation. The school was *in* the village but not controlled by it.

Control of curriculum and the attention of administrative authorities were beyond the villagers, while teachers had to suffer unfair comparisons with the idealised role models villagers held, gleaned from religious teaching or stories handed down. In fact, education itself was no guarantee whatsoever that people would be "modern" or think in new ways. Literacy, or a small amount of schooling, can just as easily reinforce tradition as change it. Knowledge of the printed word had long been a possession of the few in India, and only recently have large numbers of people begun to read. Their attitude about reading and about what material was worthwhile to read was strongly coloured by the past. I asked a number of villagers what they read.

Jalil Ahmed, 52: Mostly I read stories of my religion and the royal families of old times.

Yusuf, 26: I like books on history, what happened in the old days.

Bandagi Lal, 25: I like to read the Ramayana, Alha, ghazals, kirtan, poetry, purabi, and these days (in March) Holi books.

Ishwar Lal, 38: I like religious books.

Jai Ram, 25: Yes, I read books sometimes—the Ramayana, I sometimes read that, that's all. There's very little chance to see magazines or newspapers.

Sukh Lal, 21: I read novels, especially during vacation. Two books I liked were Vidrohi Jagirdar ("The Rebellious Estate-Holder") and Vish Kanya ("Poison Woman").

Fayyaz and Riaz Khan read only agricultural books and pamphlets.

Babu: Myself, I read every night before I sleep. Farming books. I don't like these stories: "he went here, there, he liked that girl." Chandra likes those books; I don't. I like books with knowledge. I like to read newspapers too (names two Hindi newspapers). It's too bad they don't come to the village daily. It would be nice to know what's happening.

Muhammed Amin, 51, a Railway carpenter with four years of Urdu education, came to life only when we talked about books:

I read one or two novels in a month and a few newspapers. I'll show you what I really enjoy reading. (Orders his son to bring out several thick magazines neatly bound in cheap plastic). I order these from Delhi, they're history books about the Jews, Christians and Muslims.

The magazines were in Urdu and mostly about Muslim history. Muhammed Amin told me about Tamerlane, Babur, Shah Jahan and Muhammad bin Kassim, eighth century conqueror of Sind. He explained how a catapult works and how the Arabs destroyed a temple within the walls of a Sindhi fort to make the Hindu defenders surrender. He was very proud of what his "ancestors" (co-religionists, at least) did—i.e. destroy Hindu temples and convert Hindus by force. By 1974, his favourite magazine had been suppressed by the Government as too anti-Hindu.

The school and education had had only minimum impact on the village. Whatever changes had occurred in Lilauli up to 1982 were completely separate from the school. There was almost no connection

between schooling and the agricultural transformation of the village. If some of the village leaders like Babu, Riaz, Fayyaz and Chandra could read pamphlets and do sums, other landowners involved in change were functional illiterates, like Nannua, Pachchu and Banki Lal. Except in a few cases, the school offered little of value for the future; and in terms of socialization, it was firmly tied to the past. The hex signs painted on one end of the building by old Shakku symbolized these links. Hex signs to keep off the evil eye did not match with the Government's vision of the school as an agent of change and modernity. Lilauli's school had fallen through the interstices between tradition and the new world of technology, rapid change and wider horizons. It was going nowhere.

The *maktab*, or Muslim primary school, at Jalalpur village was created to ensure that tradition was preserved and transferred to the next generation, not as a dissemination point for modernity. For most villagers, there was a simple choice to be made: send children to the *maktab* and make them good Muslims, but lessen their chances for the future, or send them to the government school where they might be able to advance through the system, but would know little of their heritage. The Muslims of Jalalpur all praised the *maktab*. They did, however, make different choices:

"He-man" All my three daughters went to the maktab because they could study the religious language [Arabic] and Urdu. Religious education is most important subject at the maktab. After all, the use of education is that the children learn about their religion. They know what to do, what not to do.

Azmat Ali, 45, Railway worker: All my children studied in the government school in Hindi. My 13 year old son is in the fourth grade. The six year old is in the first. My daughter studied up to the fourth grade and quit. Nowadays Hindi education is necessary for getting jobs. They can always study Urdu and religion later.

Muhammad Sabir, 31, Railway fireman: My daughter is in the second grade at the maktab. My son is in the seventh grade in Lucknow. First he studied in the maktab up to the fifth. I sent my son to the maktab for religious education. After he got that, I sent him to the other school. I want my children to study. What they become is up to God. But you know that without a degree in today's world, you have no value. My son couldn't become a maktab teacher. Impossible. He has gone to the government school.

Most villagers took positions closest to the third statement. They said, "We'll send our children to the *maktab* first and then to the government school." Jalalpur Muslims were proud of their *maktab* in spite of its shortcomings. It was theirs. They constantly made statements like the following:

Muhammad Sabir: I think that the maktab is better than the government school. Here the children learn arithmetic so well that they won't have any trouble up to Inter (11th grade). Then there's religious education too. I have no complaints.

Azmat Ali (who did not send his own children): I think the maktab is good because it's necessary to give children religious education. Arabic is the most important subject there. Urdu is important too. It has a sweetness and effectiveness. Hindi is just a village language.

Akhtar Husain, 35, worked at Locomotive Workshop, sent his children to the maktab; When a child finishes the fifth here, he's equal to an eighth grader in a government school, especially in mathematics. But it's still not as good as in the old days. Then any fifth grader was equal to a tenth grader today. Education was stricter and more solid then.

But according to Muhammad Anwar, one of the two teachers in the *maktab*, things were not so rosy. Teaching in the secular subjects was slack and inefficient:

Kasim (the other teacher) doesn't teach properly and especially not in arithmetic. Because of their weakness in arithmetic, when they go to the government schools after the fifth grade, some children are put in the third, some in the second. Even though they've passed the fifth grade in the maktab. Last year none of the children could do division by three figures. Jalalpur used to be Raunaq's best but now two or three maktab have surpassed it.

The villagers made statements based on a situation that had already changed. The quality of the *maktab* had gone down but few bothered to investigate for themselves. They were content to leave such matters to the teachers. Lilauli's government primary school could afford to continue in such a desultory fashion, but the Jalalpur *maktab* could not. Because there were two competing schools nearby, and because there were no higher institutions of learning available in Urdu, the *maktab* had to

maintain a high efficiency. Otherwise it seemed inevitable that it would close down, or become a mere "after school" centre on the lines of schools maintained in the West by various ethnic communities. The Muslims clearly feared the secularization policy of the government. They felt "secularization" often meant "Hinduization." As Ghaffur said:

The government would like to stop us from knowing our religion. They don't teach Urdu in their schools and they would like to stop us from having maktabas. But if we don't teach our children their religion, how will they learn? In government schools they just read about Ram, Lakshman, and Rahim.

Though Muslims often made statements of this kind, I found no evidence to support them. There is no such policy. Some primary school textbooks do show the lack of sensitivity common to majorities the world over. The naughty child in basic texts too often had a Muslim name or was the only one wearing Muslim-style dress. Textbook revision to erase prejudicial images is still a controversial topic in the West, no doubt a need to discuss the issue exists in India too. Certainly the perception of discrimination among Muslims was real.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EFFECTIVENESS

We may judge effectiveness by two standards. One way is to look at the Government of India's criteria for establishing schools and promoting education. This would include examining the Five Year Plans, the writings of eminent Indian educationists in such works as the Kothari Commission Reports and books like those by Biswas *et al.*, Mazumdar, Naik and Shukla noted in the Bibliography of this book. The Government of India itself gathers information in order to judge the effectiveness of the organisations it has set up to bring change to the masses of Indian people. This information is largely statistical. Evaluation of village schools by the government is mostly based on "counting material achievements and measuring accomplishments against administratively set goals."¹ There is little qualitative evaluation. Few governments possess or seek out such information. But in our examination of Lilauli between 1969 and 1982, particularly in Chapter Three, we have seen that the statistics were wildly inaccurate. A picture of education in India, or any of its states or districts, drawn from statistics would be misleading at the very least.² In Lilauli, recording statistics was an activity that demonstrated the conscientiousness of the teacher; but it was not a collection of factual data. For example, all children of roughly the same age group were enrolled by the teacher as first graders. Their names appeared on the roll and a particular number of children were recorded at the Baburi and Block offices. Less than half of these ever actually sat in class. Attendance statistics are thus not reliable. In any case, attendance was often taken a few hours after school opened to allow for late arrivals. Every month these attendance "figures" were sent to the Block Centre office.

Birth dates were another indicator of statistical unreliability. In 1970, first graders should have been six years old, born in 1964. Without any written information and because people did not know their exact date of birth, Bhaiya Lal listed in the register two first graders as born on each even day of the months of February and early March of 1964. One must realise what all these statistics are based on—the need to keep statistics.

Statistics in Jalalpur tended to be more accurate because the students paid fees. St. Augustine's existed in a world in which quantitative analyses were possible, yet such analyses would represent only a minute fraction of the Indian picture.

The other standard by which the effectiveness of the three schools may be judged is from the communities' point of view, though they have no set, well-established criteria for judging effectiveness. Their views on education vary as does their degree of awareness of what goes on in a school. Nevertheless, I think it very relevant to take these "clients'" views into serious consideration. Both standards of judgment, those of government and of clients, are important, but because the former receives great attention in a multitude of statistical abstracts, and the latter almost none, I shall concentrate on the latter.

If we want to understand whether these schools are effective, the organization-environment relationship is crucial. In each of the three schools there is a different standard of organisational effectiveness—a different situation to be understood before making evaluations.

Durkheim wrote that education is "the systematic socialisation of the young generation by adults."³ Socialisation itself "may be broadly defined as the inculcation of the skills and attitudes necessary for playing social roles."⁴ There are certain activities in every culture which are specifically aimed at socialising children, and there is also a body of beliefs or theories that accompany each culture's socialising practices. Such activities include initiation rituals, child-raising behaviour, informal but deliberate exercise of socialising pressures and of course in most modern societies, mass media and schooling. To decide on the schools' effectiveness we have to look not only at the way in which children are channelled towards jobs and higher education or prepared for efficient farming, but also at how they are socialised into village society. In many parts of the world—Africa, Melanesia, Aboriginal America and Australia—schools have served to alienate children from their parents' culture. This was not at all the case in Lucknow District.

Lilauli

The Lilauli school was very much part of the traditional village socialisation process. Children learned in school in much the same way they did at home. Authoritarian adults disciplined children to obey rather than requiring them to follow a particular set of fixed rules. Punishment

depended on the mood of the authority. Curiosity was not encouraged. Memorisation of religious procedures or texts at home was mirrored in the rote-learning at school. Though the government plans saw the school as an agent of change, the school fitted unobtrusively into Lilauli society precisely because it had adjusted to village patterns so well. The teachers could function because they did not try to force the learning process out of its traditional Indian mould. Bhaiya Lal and Sita were part of the "systematic socialisation by adults" of the Lilauli children. As Mansur found in her study of a Turkish town, village parents "have a tendency to surrender the children to the teachers. They rely on them to make the child work hard and even allow them to resort to giving them a hiding if need be."⁵ The Lilauli teachers were not agents of change, they were simply *in loco parentis*. What is more, schooling was not compulsory. If anyone objected to the school or the behaviour of the teachers, they did not have to send their children.

Few villagers spent much time thinking about the school or educational issues. The great majority of Lilauli adults had not attended school of any kind. Yet when asked what they saw as the chief benefit of school and education, the people of Lilauli were nearly unanimous; education enabled children to get along in the outside world, and to talk and deal with traders, government officials or visitors on an equal basis. Children no longer feared strangers, they said; the school had given the new generation confidence. In more academic terms, the children have been socialised to a wider society. Whether what the villagers said was true is irrelevant. If they felt it was so, it was so.

A second benefit the villagers saw accruing from the school was that some children were prepared to go on with their studies, climbing the educational ladder to white-collar jobs in the city. In 1970 there was no outcry about the school's inefficiency in Lilauli. Over the years, though, while agriculture, industry and accessibility to the political process changed, the school did not. The villagers were certainly aware of this. Their lack of outcry was due to two things. First, Indian villagers seldom make public "outcry" unless conditions are very bad indeed. While poor economic conditions are likely to lead to protest, poor government services, which are relatively new in any case, are not. Economic conditions had improved greatly in the last twenty years for most people, so people in Lilauli were inclined to regard the school with wry humour if they thought of it at all. Second, people did think the school prepared

children for modern life, even if only a very few got city jobs. They tended to regard school as lottery ticket held collectively. The chance of winning (a city job) was low, but without the ticket there was no chance at all.

The prosperity that came to Lilauli during the 1960s and 1970 was due to the learning of new skills and techniques and to the willingness of a few people to take risks. The school played an extremely minor role. I shall return to this topic shortly. As long as a reasonable number of fifth-graders went on to the sixth grade, village parents felt the school was doing its job effectively.

By 1982, government money had been spent on the Lilauli school for over two decades, but there were glaring problems. Basic Education never worked and had to be dropped. Enrolment and attendance statistics were manufactured to meet what teachers felt was a "norm." Sita had been absent 75 per cent of the time. Bhaiya Lal and his successors read novels and gossiped during school hours. Bhaiya Lal's complaints about Sita were justified but completely ignored. Teaching methods and discipline were traditional; they were not what the government prescribed. Contacts between village, Local Centre, Block Centre and District Board were tenuous, because communication was still slow or non-existent. The Lilauli school and the rural administrative centres were in a different cultural milieu from the urban planners and directors of education. Inspectors were urban men, living in the city, who did desk work rather than tour the countryside. Their tentative excursions out of Lucknow were symbolised by Sub-Deputy Inspector Trivedi's sun helmet. The urban bureaucracy, as we have seen, hardly impinged on a rural school. Without rigorous supervision and without any attempt to enforce government requirements, the village school reflected its cultural milieu. From the Government of India's point of view, the school must be considered ineffective. It is not likely that either computers and new technology or mere exhortation from on high will make the school and its thousands of counterparts effective.

Jalalpur

The Jalalpur *maktab* was involved in a still more complicated "mix" of cultural values. Religious Muslim villagers had a different outlook from the government but also from their fellow Muslims living in traditionally Muslim sections of Lucknow. Both Muslim groups were opposed to the secular policies of the government—they asked if secularization did not

really mean Hinduization—but the Jalalpur Muslims had to come to terms with economic and social reality more quickly than the Muslims of Lucknow city who remained isolated from the majority community. Thus, there were three ways to define organizational effectiveness in Jalalpur: From the points of view of village Muslims, urban Muslims or the urban, secular government. The Lilauli school was unchallenged in its field, but the government-run village school in Jalalpur offered strong alternatives to the *maktab*.

In the *maktab* also, village patterns of discipline and learning were maintained. There was no question of anything but traditional methods of socialization. The *maktab* was created by village initiative and its administration was still largely in village hands. In a discussion of the *maktab's* effectiveness, we cannot follow precisely the same path we took for Lilauli. Lilauli saw its school as socializing children to the outside world. The Jalalpur *maktab* was created specifically to prevent this. Jalalpur Muslims all agreed that their children were learning Arabic, Urdu and the ways of Islam at the *maktab*. Their goals were being met—the school was effectively socializing the children into the Faith.

The *maktab's* problems lay elsewhere. Of the three schools in the study, the *maktab* faced the greatest difficulties. It had to compete with the government schools. The *maktab* had greater prestige and legitimacy among Muslims than its government rivals because it was a traditional religious institution founded by the Muslims of Jalalpur themselves. At its outset there was a plentiful supply of money and children. Over the years, Jalalpur village increasingly became tied economically to Lucknow city. Jobs were more important; secular knowledge more valued. *Maktab* children all had to attend government schools after the fifth grade because of the lack of Islamic facilities nearby. A good knowledge of Hindi was all important for success in the government schools, but they did not get adequate Hindi in the *maktab*. Already the more worldly parents had begun sending their children (at least the boys) to the government school in Rabbi Khara. What the children of the Muslim *mohalla* in Jalalpur needed was, as Zaki said so concisely, "*Din aur duniya, dono*"—"Both the Faith and the World." They were getting too little of the latter to survive or compete equally in government junior high schools.

What made the situation more difficult was that the managers of the *maktab*, including Anwar, the religious teacher, were from

Raunaq-i-Islam, an institution more steeped in the Islamic tradition than the villagers themselves. Rather than being leaders who insured the school's survival by bringing it in tune with the times, the men from Raunaq would be the last to see a need for change. Here in the Muslim sub-culture of Lucknow District, the urban tradition was less change-oriented than the rural one. The villagers were exposed to government development activities more and had daily contact with their Hindu neighbours. The urban Muslims still lived in their own world. Rural-urban variations had a different character in Jalalpur than in Lilauli, but they nevertheless threatened the effectiveness of the *maktab*. Economic necessity could bring an end to the *maktab*. It certainly curtailed its appeal.

From a government point of view, it is obvious that the Jalalpur *maktab* was not preparing the children effectively for life in modern India. By offering Urdu in primary or junior high schools, the government could bring many of the Muslim children into its secular system. It has not chosen to do so.

St Augustine's

St Augustine's School for Boys operated in a different world from the other two schools. Here there was neither "soft state" reluctance to make decisions nor deep involvement in the two-culture problem. St Augustine's, along with four other private, English-language, Christian-run schools, stood at the top of Lucknow's educational heap. As a prestige school, it offered, in comparison with the government schools' mass education, an elite education.

St Augustine's had to struggle for pupils at its inception, but such was the demand for English education that by 1970 the school was rejecting more pupils than it accepted. Parents, educated themselves, kept standards high by demanding good results in the government examinations. There was no organization through which the pupil-contributing "community" could control school policy, but ultimate control lay with the Lucknow-wide "community" because it controlled the flow of money and pupils and granted legitimacy to St Augustine's activities.

This school fits most easily into its total environment. Of our three Lucknow schools, St Augustine's had the greatest amount of support from its community, defined as the Westernizing, middle and upper-middle

class of Lucknow city. The good opinion of the community was courted assiduously. School dress, language, discipline and routine all reflected this. Though St Augustine's was a Catholic school run by Brothers, to avoid alienating the Hindu majority in the supporting community, Christianity played no overt role.

Parents who sent children, all the teachers and Brothers and a fair percentage of the population of Lucknow firmly believed that the type of education offered at St Augustine's was good. The community made its commitment by paying high fees. The pressure to increase the number of grades taught was added proof of satisfaction. There was no doubt that a boy who did well at St Augustine's would go on to "bigger and better things." Because the education provided at St Augustine's closely matched the type of education that the community thought was effective, we can conclude that this school was effective organization in the eyes of its clients.

The government too must see St Augustine's as effective. After all, the Government of India is filled with men who are the products of schools like St Augustine's. But if we return to the subject of socialization, a shadow of doubt begins to edge across the bright face of St Augustine's success. After only five years of education, the 5th English class was firmly alienated from the children in Lilauli and Jalalpur. A St Augustine's graduate will sail easily into a good college. His future is assured. This experience will separate him by a wide gulf from his counterparts a few miles away. He will be part of the English-speaking elite. Over and above the actual schooling, such boys come from families likely to have the right contacts to enable them to secure good jobs. The boys are already engaged in building a network of contacts for the future, whether they realize it or not. Children in Lilauli and Jalalpur are excluded from this process completely.

The question of organizational effectiveness merges with the question of education's role in the development and modernization processes at grassroots level. Effectiveness in teaching is not the only criterion on which to judge schools. There is also the more subtle and less definable problem of determining how far the school is effectively playing a role in the development process. Despite the reams of statistics, the answer to this question cannot be quantified. There are so many possible shades of behaviour, attitudes, ideals and expectations. It is a question of values as well as of relation to agriculture, industry and socio-

economic change.

Though Western development planners and their Indian counterparts have often emphasized the need for "human resource development" and although popular sentiment in most parts of the world demands access to education, the importance of school in the process of economic change is not clear. For Indian farmers, the village primary school is a peripheral institution. Attendance is not even compulsory. Everyone declares that it is a good thing to have, but few are very concerned about what goes on there or what results are obtained. Economic change has occurred outside of school. A certain number of villagers need to know how to read and write, fill in forms or add and subtract to realize potential profit or loss. Some people need to be able to read pamphlets or instruction manuals, but these might teach the rest, and, indeed, that is what has happened. Indian villagers have absorbed the Western attitude held by the urban bourgeoisie that schooling is important, but in the actual scheme of things, school remains peripheral. The ideals of villagers and Government about schools contrast with their actual behaviour toward schools. School learning is an ideal, both for villagers and the Government. Village people say they would like their children to attend class. They say schooling is important and that teachers are respected figures. "Guru" is still an emotive word for the Hindu majority. In fact, however, few parents insist that their children go to school. Their actions show that schooling takes second place to work or family duties. They do not respect the teachers and do not consider them to be anything like the revered (and unknown) gurus of the past. In the Plans, the Government expresses the ideal that all Indians attain a certain level of literacy and numeracy, but in fact has never put great practical efforts into achieving this. The majority of Indians (over 60%) remain illiterate. The National Policy on Education of 1986 seemed unlikely to change the situation.

Villagers do not have high expectations of the school or teachers. They do not see the school as an adjunct to what has happened in agriculture or as a stepping-stone to jobs in industry. Contacts are more important in the latter, and as we have noted, the agricultural changes took place separately from schooling.

Let us now examine each of the three schools in terms of these contrasting ideals, attitudes, behaviours and expectations.

Lilauli

The school in Lilauli was introduced by the Government and the former *zamindar*. Lilauli villagers were proud of their school, but they were not strongly attached to it. The school was a prestige symbol and a boon from the powers-that-be. Although they believed that school socialized the children to the wider society, people were not absolutely convinced that they should educate their children. In the eight years between 1974 and 1982, only one boy had managed to complete a tertiary education. He had done an LL.B and was "practising" law without notable success. The villagers laughed about his degree, saying it was not worth anything. "Everything has gone bad," they said, "you can enrol, stay home without attending class, show the invigilator a pistol at the exam and pass!" The degradation of tertiary education was well known and certainly did not encourage parents to push their children through the boring, incompetent and often useless process education had become. Education might lead to a clerical job, but there were doubts on this point. Many parents were illiterate so they did not know if their children were being well taught. They could not judge which subjects were most necessary for their children to learn. They doubted if the schools were being well-administered. They could see that teachers did not come and that the building remained in disrepair. Though villagers had been told education is good and they had come to believe in it as an ideal (as opposed to practice), the purpose of the school has remained undefined till today. So far nothing concrete has been established. Educated villagers realized full well that the school did not compare with city schools. The illiterate majority could not judge and did not concern itself, but continuing low enrolments spoke for themselves.

Though Lilauli's school had been in operation for 21 years by 1982, its effectiveness in enrolling and keeping the village children in class had not improved. There were now about 1,000 people in Lilauli. If we take the all-India figure of 51 per cent of the population being under 20,⁶ then we might expect roughly 127 children would have been between the ages of six and ten. Fifty-two children were enrolled in 1982, almost certainly less than half the school-age population, but as only twenty were present when I visited, and as this had been typical in 1969-70 as well, it seemed still to be true that a very small proportion of children were finishing primary school. Parents obviously did not feel it a worthwhile use of their children's time.

The sole standards of the Lilauli villagers were derived from the barely-glimpsed school in Baburi, the only one in the area for many years,

or the often-remembered stories of gurus and their devoted disciples. Three thousand years of Hindu tradition established the guru-disciple model firmly. A guru was wise, respected, high caste and unconcerned with material reward. The memory of the Brahmin as scholar-priest lived on, as did the sense of caste hierarchy. Pupils touched the feet of their Brahmin teacher at Dubepur, a few miles away, though this practice was admittedly uncommon. Modern village primary school teachers are often low-caste men like Bhaiya Lal (or "shameless" women like Sita) working for small salaries, sometimes going on strike for more money. Their style of living is poor, often lower than that of the villagers whose children they teach. As teachers, their profession is linked to the ideal of "guru", but they do not have the prestige of a real guru. Babu could not have dared to order a respected guru to donate Rs. 5 for sweets. Jamuna could not have dared to criticize a guru openly for disciplining his son. Nearly all villagers stated that "we respect Bhaiya Lal because he teaches our children", but could not name any way in which they showed respect except "he tells parents to send children to school and they do it." In fact, many openly ridiculed the teachers or dismissed them as "government servants, not real teachers." The old ideals and ritual status have been undermined by the economic transformation which began in British times. Wealth and *shan* (show) replaced the traditional types of prestige. The teachers lacked both old ritual status and modern economic status. The villagers wanted their children to be taught by someone closer to their ideal of "guru," though most professed to be satisfied. Through Government of India propaganda, the villagers knew they *should be* satisfied with these "dedicated teachers, drawn from the masses, working for India for a pittance." They remained dissatisfied and sceptical. The rapid and radical changes in Indian society during the past forty years have led people to have contradictory feelings about village school teachers.

For an organization to be effective its "efforts must produce something useful or acceptable to at least part of the organizational environment to win continued support." Villagers treated the government school as a status symbol. The school had prestige in that there *is* a school in Lilauli where there had not been one before. The parents said that they were glad their children had a chance that they never had themselves. But the school must develop into a useful institution or continue to suffer lack of real support. Mere status and prestige are not enough.

The school in Lilauli was not really *of* the village. Few villagers did anything to establish it. Villagers did not pay for the teachers directly. The organizational model was imported, the curriculum decided in Lucknow and teachers appointed from Lucknow. If children passed the fifth-grade examinations and the school was "school-like" in nature, villagers tolerated it. Now, almost all villages have schools, and there is fierce competition in examinations and for jobs. In the days of few village schools, a primary-school education was a passport to a clerical job. Those days are over. The children were not becoming proficient in either agricultural studies or urban examination-oriented knowledge. Their failure to be able to compete with urban children will ultimately be called into question by Lilauli. By 1982 it was already apparent to the village that the school did not prepare children to be better farmers. If the students continued on after primary school, it was more likely that they would refuse to have anything to do with agriculture. A crisis in legitimacy was developing. The school's contribution to the planned development process is questionable. Most children still do not finish the fifth grade. In 1981 there were ten fifth-graders. Nine took the examination, eight passed and "most" went on to Grade Six. There had been little change in eleven years. Despite what villagers said about schooling being important, after 21 years, very few children completed a primary education. Their level of literacy and potential for being aware citizens was doubtful. Unless they owned land, their ability to participate in India's agricultural or industrial development, except as labourers, was also dubious. The school was not a source of new ideas or practices. Neither was it a route to a better life. The few Lilauli children who climbed the wall of glass⁸ met increasingly stiff competition from their urban, middle-class and upper middle-class counterparts. They were prevented from using their education to the national benefit. As we saw in Chapter Three the school and teachers were very much part of the village socialization process. The attitudes or behaviours that the Government wanted to encourage were totally ignored. If development means a process of change leading to a better life for everyone in India, then the Lilauli school is only marginally related to that process. "Modernization," with its connotations of following a particular model, nearly always Western, has no relation to such a village school.

Jalalpur

The *maktab* presented a different picture. The Muslim villagers of Jalalpur knew why their children should attend. They had a good idea

what the children should learn. The *maktab* was founded by the villagers to make sure their children stayed firmly within the Islamic fold. The administration, instead of being representative of a different value system, reinforced the Islamic values that the villagers wanted to preserve even more strongly than the villagers themselves might have done. The teachers were accorded the prestige traditionally given to the *maulvi*. Unlike Lilauli, there was no gap between the status of these teachers and a traditional ideal. Unquestionably, the values surrounding the *maktab* were acceptable to the people who used it.

But the Jalalpur *maktab* had the problem faced by many minority group institutions the world over. By catering only to special interests, the *maktab* guaranteed that when these interests waned or were challenged, it would fade away. In 1970, the organizational goals were being met. The children were learning about their religion, they were not exposed to "Hinduized" textbooks and they got enough secular knowledge (in village opinion) to enter the sixth grade of the government school. The villagers were satisfied that the organization was working. Nevertheless the *maktab* teetered on the brink of ruin. When the villagers realize, as Anwar did, that the children are not able to cope with the government curriculum, the small number of Muslim children attending the government primary school or the government girls' school may become a flood. Most Muslims will abandon the *maktab* because, though outwardly pious, village Muslims have a strong practical streak. Dissension in the community had already cut off the flow of money. The badly needed school building could not be constructed. If there is no money and people begin attaching increased value to the government schools as more practical in economic terms, eventually the prestige and legitimacy held by the *maktab* will be lost. Thus even the *maktab* was caught in the web of contradictory ideals, attitudes and behaviour. The process of development already had influenced the village. People were aware of other possibilities in life; they had higher expectations than their parents had had. So far, the *maktab* was seen as an institution that could coexist with the institutions and activities associated with change in Lucknow District. The question is how long will this last? Eventually, the *maktab's* situation may turn out to be very similar to the Lilauli primary school's. It may become a peripheral institution. There are arguments to say it already is one. The *maktab* can hardly be called part of either the development or modernization process.

St Augustine's

St Augustine's was not a peripheral institution; neither did it embody contrasting ideals and attitudes as did the two village schools. The parents of boys enrolled here knew very well why they wanted their children to attend and were willing to make considerable sacrifice to insure that they did. The parents also believed they knew what constitutes a good school and presumed that the administration would live up to their expectations. The teachers' pay was far better than in Lilauli or Jalalpur though still by no means high. The prestige of teaching at St Augustine's was more important in the long run because a man with a good record of teaching there had hope of a college position or a job in an elite school in Delhi or the Himalayan foothills. St Augustine teachers had better facilities and a more receptive student body than most. Lower-middle-class urban men, upper-caste village men (or middle class women), the teachers at St Augustine's had a prestige and respect accorded them unparalleled by that of any colleague at a government or traditional religious school. And there was no one among them who did not believe that St Augustine boys were getting a good education.

The administrative autonomy at this school allowed it to respond more efficiently to problems. The Principal could fire inept or often-absent teachers; he could change subjects or procedure without struggling with a distant bureaucracy. The school was free from the "soft state" conditions of Lucknow District government and was not subject to a far away office staffed by people with different values.

Without a doubt, the type of education given at St Augustine's was an elite commodity. Family contacts, an upper-middle-class background and a superior education with command of English would place these boys in remunerative jobs. The emphasis on English created trouble for many pupils, but everyone knew that a good knowledge of English would be invaluable later on—in the university, in a career, even in making a marriage. However, long exposure to a non-Indian language and culture turns students into strangers in their own land—and elite strangers moreover. They are at the top of urban society with an experience utterly different from boys in the thousands of Lilaulis and Jalalpurs of India. Their education leads to "modernization" in the strongest sense—graduates lose touch with their own roots and become in many ways dependent on an outside culture—the mass culture of the West. The St Augustine's graduates may eventually be able to make decisions that

affect the lives of the vast majority. They will not know what conditions are like or how people behave in the villages. Many will never have been in a village. The gulf that already exists between the planners and development specialists at the top and the villages at the bottom will continue to grow wider. Such a disparity can only increase the difficulties in India's efforts to organise and work for the national goals and to develop a national sense of purpose. In this sense, the whole St Augustine educational experience leads to increasing disparities in India's ideals, attitudes and expectations. It illustrates another part of India's educational dilemma. If schools such as those in Lilauli and Jalalpur do not produce people who can easily contribute to the improvement of agriculture, industry or social conditions (i.e., development), St Augustine's does produce those who will be called upon to make such contributions. They will be qualified in technical and professional terms, but they will have a different system of values. Their contributions will be from a perspective divorced from Indian reality.

I am not questioning the fact that India is producing large numbers of skilled and well-trained professionals, managers and workmen. The point that this study of grassroots education emphasizes is the appalling waste of time, effort and talent in just two of the thousands of similar village schools. For every trained professional or skilled worker there are vast numbers of educational dropouts or castoffs. Furthermore, most of the well-educated people with needed skills come from the narrow group that can attend schools like St Augustine's; most of the unsuccessful ones from schools like those in Lilauli or Jalalpur. Any discussion of school effectiveness from a national point of view must underline this reality above all.

CONCLUSIONS

The graduates of the two village schools may expect failure and frustration, caught between the urban and rural spheres of Lucknow District life. Even if they manage to complete high school and go on to university, they face the widespread unemployment of educated youth prevalent in Lucknow and the rest of India. They cannot compete with urban-educated boys for the few plush jobs, for good grades in the university or for commissions in the military; and they do not want to farm. Anyway, often their families have too little land or none at all.

By 1970, one or two young men from Lilauli had secured clerical jobs in Lucknow. Many villagers expressed the hope that their children also might get such "service" in the city. More than a dozen "hopefuls," aged 15 to 26, were studying in the ninth grade or above. None of them planned to return to farming or buffalo-raising in Lilauli.

In 1974 it was abundantly clear that except for one or two cases, the hope placed in education was ill-founded. School was not an effective springboard to urban jobs for sons of families with insufficient land. Boys began to work at village tasks after completing primary school or simply stayed home to help their parents (as did all the girls). Their education did not enable them to go elsewhere. Some youths already were challenging the discipline of their elders, talked about marrying for love, and modelled dress and speech on their favourite film stars. Their schooling had given them wider horizons and a limited but powerful understanding of life's possibilities. It had not given them the means to achieve any of them. Here, in the boldest possible terms, is the challenge to India's policy makers. Playing about with paper objectives or talking about value education and work experience will change nothing. As long as education remains academically-oriented and English stays the elite language, Lilauli children are destined to run far behind in the race for jobs and "success." Home background and language environment must be seen as more influential in deciding Lilauli children's fate than a theoretical "good school." Policy makers must come to terms with this.

I listed four goals in the Introduction. The first was to describe the schools at grassroots level, leaving aside masses of statistics and prescriptive theories. This has been done. A second goal was to show how the schools were related to the social and cultural milieu of Lucknow District. To survive as an organisation the village school had to adapt to the local social environment. Children were required to attend school by law, but no one enforced this rule. The school used persuasion to get some pupils, but in return, the teachers conformed to Lilauli's idea of how children should be disciplined and what values should be inculcated. In this way, the government goals for education were thwarted, but the school and teachers became more accepted and the school was integrated into the village. The school did not bring about social change any more than it brought economic change. In the long run, education was not able to live up to its promise because of problems such as overpopulation, lack of jobs, its own low standards, the competition from urban students with a more favoured background and the subsequent lack of strong interest among villagers.

By 1982 disillusionment with education had grown even wider in Lilauli. Not only had the hoped-for clerical jobs not materialised but there had been a gradual realisation that school was not capable of offering very much at all. The perceptions about education in the village had changed. Some people felt a better knowledge of English was the answer, others favoured agricultural training.

Village candidates needed to know English to compete with their St Augustine's rivals for jobs, but English was not taught until Grade 6 and then only as one of many subjects. If the family had enough land to farm profitably, then English was not essential because the boys were going to inherit land. What landowners would have liked was education that would help their children to be better farmers. They were not getting it. Riaz Khan was already commenting that "they never want to farm anymore." The desire for a village-style, agricultural education conflicted with the world-wide demand of rural people to have a stake in the urban, clerical job-lottery. There have been a multitude of plans all through the Third World to provide rural children with an agriculturally-oriented education. Such education is usually regarded by rural people as second-class and as an attempt to keep the prestigious positions for the urban elites. Yet here in Lilauli we can see that such agriculturally-oriented education did suit some villagers, but it was a special, small minority—

those who had enough land to make a comfortable living. I suspect that if such families have many sons to inherit and divide the land, they too will reject agricultural education sooner or later.

Many villagers state that education gives their children a confidence that they never had themselves. It seems to me, however, that this is related to the fact that Indian society is undergoing rapid change. There is a vast rise in awareness of the world, of politics, of possibilities in life and of basic human rights. This changed atmosphere may be more influential than school in giving children their new found confidence. However, it is certain that the new attitudes were not at all appreciated by the parents. Many villagers commented on the indiscipline of youth. Some villagers, mainly in the upper socio-economic group, already felt that education "spoil" the young men who studied beyond the primary school because they did not want to farm and did not identify with village ways any more. People from the lower strata, particularly poor Muslims, said that in the old days education led to *tehzib* (Urdu for "a polished way of speaking," "a polite, civilised manner"), but now it did not.

Tendencies in the direction of more practical training and of more English, urban-style education could already be seen in Lilauli by 1982. If and when such demands are made and if they are not met, there could be a stronger reaction against the present educational system. There is enough political awareness in the villages of Lucknow District to make the schools and their quality a political issue. The villagers might be able to influence the election of men who could bring reform to village education. In other countries, though, and in other parts of India, education and politics do not mix with notable success at a local level. The schools become prey to political interference and lose what stability they have.¹

In 1970 many villagers, especially illiterates, stated that they had "no idea" about school and education. Between 1970 and 1982, nearly everyone came to understand the school's ineffectiveness. In brief, the value of the school and education decreased over the years. People realised that the school was not functioning well—it was not meeting any of their own criteria for success.

The problem of quality remains. The curriculum might be revised to be more relevant to the village, but there is no single standard of relevance. Some villagers feel that more agriculture is needed; some

would prefer more emphasis on traditional religio-cultural learning; and others reject the idea of "village" education and want parity with urban schools. Curriculum is a most delicate issue.

A third goal of this book was to show the role of the schools in the grassroots process of change—to connect maths, Hindi, jobs and status to wheat, cattle, mangoes and sugarcane. Chapter Seven, and the last few pages, discussed this topic in detail. In conclusion, let me say that Lilauli's school was introduced to bring "progress" to the village. It was immediately coopted by traditional forces and came to be seen as valuable only in the context of aiding relations between the village and the outside world. This position is now under challenge. Jalalpur's *maktab* was introduced to maintain tradition in the Muslim community. It came under threat from "progress" in the shape of the modernising trends of the nearby city, "Green Revolution" agriculture and the pull of the government school. Both the Lilauli and Jalalpur schools face severe crises. It remains to be seen whether they will continue to garner even a modicum of acceptance.

The only possible difficulty for St Augustine's is that in a future India, if the value of English and Western-style education were to decline, the school might become outmoded and its graduates dispensable. This is not in sight. St Augustine's graduates have hope in life; their future is assured.

A symbolic-instrumental continuum might be imagined along which the three schools would fall.² The school at Lilauli was most symbolic. It brought status to the village and especially to the traditional power holder, Babu, who was responsible for its construction. He used it as an adjunct to his personal property. The school was absorbed into the village socialisation process, but children were not prepared for any practical village purpose, neither were they equipped to get urban employment. They received only the amorphous "ability to communicate with the outside world."

In Jalalpur, the school was less symbolic. Villagers created the school to instruct their children in the Islamic faith and the *maktab* performed this task. The children did not have to attend schools their parents felt to be Hinduized. On the other hand, the *maktab* pupils were not adequately prepared to enter the world outside the folds of the Islamic community. There were no facilities for them to continue Islamic

education beyond Grade 5. They did poorly in government schools and could not hope to get good jobs. The *maktab* had become a socially-expensive symbol of adherence to tradition.

St Augustine's had a certain symbolic character in the sense that its diploma, and the English language a pupil had to learn, symbolised an initiation into the Indian elite. Such a view can only be held by an outsider. For all those involved, the school had been created to do a job, and it was doing that job efficiently. St Augustine's graduates were well-prepared to do what their parents and teachers expected of them. The school thus fell at the instrumental end of the continuum.

Besides tendencies to symbolic rather than instrumental functions, the schools at Lilauli and Jalalpur provided evidence of a great gap between planning and practice, urban government and village reality, prescriptive educationalists and grassroots teachers. I took the examination of school effectiveness from different points of view as my fourth goal. Thus, this book has emphasized the participants' view of schools—parents and teachers, inspectors and principals, as much as that of policy makers. Such people did not make educational policy, nor did they set organizational guidelines. Policy, finance, organization were decided at higher levels: in 1970 by the District Board, by the Uttar Pradesh Ministry of Education, and in part by the Central Government's Ministry of Education in New Delhi and the Planning Commission. I did not survey or study such decision-making groups. It appears to me that the lack of accurate information and meaningful contact with the village schools greatly impairs the understanding by these high level groups of the organizational effectiveness of schools. Government action and policy on education might be very different if information were freely available and if there were effective bureaucratic machinery for making and enforcing decisions. Whether Indian politicians have any longterm interest in mass education is also questionable. Again, this is part of the overall challenge to policy makers in education.

The bad conditions described in earlier chapters make it clear that the schools do not perform up to government expectations. Any evaluation must rate them as very poor performers. Discipline is bad, learning is sacrificed to memorization, children's curiosity is crushed instead of encouraged, there is no emphasis on self-improvement or the possible benefits of such improvement, and children are scolded or punished but never praised. Traditional education, if it stressed memorization and

discouragement of curiosity, at least offered a respected and compassionate guru who guided the disciples wisely and strongly. Now the gurus no longer exist and the villagers are aware of it. The children become "dropouts" because only a dogged few—those able to endure the confusion, beatings, and hours of meaningless tasks—can go on to higher education. Those that do go on are hopelessly behind the children of schools like St Augustine's. The number of children in Lucknow District with access to schools of St Augustine's calibre is minute compared to the number passing through the village primary schools. If Western countries cannot afford to waste as many young talents and potentials as they do, how much more true for India where national reconstruction is a formidable task?

It is easy to criticise, but suggesting remedies is difficult. For a foreigner to make judgments about Indian education without basing them on the feelings of the people served by the school system no doubt is arrogant. Yet village parents admitted that they themselves cannot judge educational quality. They did not know what the basic requirements were for an educational organization that would serve them well. Many villagers have neither thought, nor are they concerned, about the problem.

The school systems represented by Lilauli and St Augustine's take their form and content from the ideas of the *modernizing* elite groups about what education and development should be. Village people have had very little input into the educational system that is supposed to serve them. Decisions have been taken which stem from the Westernised world view of the people who run the Indian system. Their world view is transmitted in the schools like St Augustine's that educate their children and perpetuate their class. This world view—their feelings about the ways things ought to be, the nature of "reality," and the proper behaviours, attitudes and ideals a citizen ought to have—is widely different from the view held by villagers. Development is a goal nearly everyone in India seeks. Modernisation—emulation of the West, conscious or unconscious—has been included in the development process by the elite which has its roots in the colonial past. Emulation is a largely negative process; one loses one's own identity and the chance to innovate. The ultimate success or failure of Indian education in my opinion will depend on India's ability to create a system which stems from the country's grassroot needs and which functions in a more effective way to reach its goals. There would be more innovation and less emulation. The British colonial-school model constructed on the lines of traditional *pathshalas* has come to the

end of its road. A new system would not be divided so stringently between rich and poor, urban and rural, modernised and developing.

Even if the same system continues, which seems most likely, a number of innovations might be made. Increased salaries for teachers would raise their prestige in village eyes. A higher salary would attract more educated and idealistic young men who merely ask a decent wage. A para-military volunteer Literacy Corps might work very well. Such volunteers would not be seen as too engrossed in pecuniary matters, neither would the tight discipline that might accompany such an organization be offensive to villagers. More money could be made available for teaching resources too. At the moment there are hardly any resources at all.

Pupil monitors might be used, as was done in Indian tradition, to help keep smaller children quiet and busy while the teacher instructs the older ones. This would have the double advantage of allowing concentration for pupils trying to work and permitting the teacher to focus on one class at a time. Although the monitors would lose time from their own studies, their loss would not be more than at present. In addition, they might learn by teaching.

From the administration side, there are several possible changes. Communication is exceedingly slow at present. The rare and superficial inspections might be changed. Instead of trying to correct the teacher in front of villagers (lowering his or her prestige), inspectors might examine the children and later send written criticism to a central point, leaving a copy with the teacher. Another alternative might be village-based inspectors so as to eliminate the obvious urban-rural gap that now exists. Local Centres or Block Centres might be provided with small sums of money to allow the heads to telephone Lucknow city for quick questions or replies. The literate Panchayat Adalat members might serve as an advisory council to the Block Centre on educational matters. Their opinions could be a powerful influence on District and U.P. politicians. An educational ombudsman to whom villagers could bring complaints is another possibility for improving educational quality. Such an ombudsman might be an educated villager familiar with government and village educational goals. Villagers would not be slow to bring their difficulties to a receptive ear. In cases like that of Lilauli vs. Sita, there is currently nowhere the villagers may go to complain. Even Bhaiya Lal's complaints to the District Board were never examined.

Eventually, more local control of education might be the answer. Administration at the Block or Tehsil level, instead of at District level, could bring closer supervision, faster communication and recognition of village desires as they arise.

Academic prescriptions for the ills of Indian education are plentiful. Studies of what really happens in Indian schools are not. By focusing on grassroots education, this book has tried to bridge the gap between abstraction and reality. It has therefore been much more concerned with what *is* than what "might be." Indeed, within the present system, the possibilities for change are distinctly limited. Fundamental change, either in village or urban-elite education, is likely to occur only as a consequence of the wider economic transformation now shaping the society and politics of Lucknow District and India as a whole. Until such major changes fully unfold, the portraits of the three schools in this book will, I hope, help to clarify our understanding of the problems of education in India.

NOTES

Introduction

1. J.C. Aggarwal, *National Policy on Education - 1986 with Main Recommendations of National Commissions on Teachers* (Delhi: Doaba House, 1986), p. 171.
2. Ibid., p. 175.
3. Ibid., pp. 15-16.
4. Ibid., p. 120.
5. *India Today*, 30 Nov. 1987, pp. 34-41.
6. See Altbach and Kelley 1977, Bagchi 1974, Carnoy 1974, Freire 1970, Jalee 1968 or Mannoni 1964.
7. Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama*, Vol. 1, (New York: Pantheon, 1968) pp. 66.

Chapter One

1. Ministry of Education, *Education in India, 1962-3*, Vol. II-A, Appendices (New Delhi: Government of India, 1965), p. 2.
2. Ibid., 1964-5, p. 3.

Chapter Two

1. See Carnoy 1974, Chaube 1965, Dayal 1955, D'Souza 1976, Hartog 1939, Keay 1918, McCully 1966, Rawat 1956 and Temple 1893.
2. F.E. Keay, *Ancient Indian Education* (London: Oxford University Press, 1918), p. 134.
3. William W. Hunter, *Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson* (London: John Murray, 1896), p. 317.
4. P.H.J.H. Gosden, compiler, *How They Were Taught* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), p. 30.
5. Ibid., p. 36.
6. J.P. Naik, *The Single-Teacher School* (New Delhi: Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1963), p. 7.
7. *Shiksha Ki Pragati 1969-70* (Allahabad: Shiksha Nideshak Karyalay, 1970), p. 46, and Central Planning Organization,

Department of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract, India 1980*, (New Delhi: Government of India, 1982), p. 510.

8. Ibid., 1970, p. 48. Ibid., 1982 p. 514.

9. Ibid., 1982, p. 519.

Chapter Three

1. Sanskritization is a process whereby whole castes try to move up the prestige scale by changing habits, occupations and attitudes. Though individuals are unsuccessful in changing their castes, as a group it is often possible over a period of years for a caste to effect such change. See M.N. Srinivas, "Sanskritization," in M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1972), pp. 1-45.

2. Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1958), pp. 20-8.

Chapter Seven

1. Merle Aldo Akeson, *Intentions of Villages and Government Subcultures in the Promotion of Rural Education in India*, Stanford University Doctoral Dissertation, Microfilm, 1957, p. 4.
2. Robert S. Newman, "But Based on What? Village Primary Education and Urban Educationists in India" in J.R. Liesch (ed.), *Comparative Perspectives on Futures in Education* (Sydney: Proceedings of the Tenth Conference of the ACIES, 1982), pp. 109-18.
3. Emile Durkheim, *Education and Sociology* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1956), p. 124.
4. Philip Mayer (ed.), *Socialization: The Approach from Social Anthropology* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), p. xiii.
5. Fatma Mansur, *Bodrum: A Town in the Aegean* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), p. 136.
6. Far Eastern Economic Review, *Asia 1978 Yearbook* (Hong Kong: 1978), p. 193.
7. J.D. Thompson and W.J. McEwen, "Organizational Goals and Environment: Goal-Setting as an Interaction Process," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 23, No. 1, February 1958, pp. 24-5.
8. J.W. Airan, T. Barnabas, A.B. Shah (eds), *Climbing a Wall of Glass: Aspects of Educational Reform in India* (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1965).

Conclusion

1. I. Narain, "Rural Local Politics and Primary School Management," in L.I. and S.H. Rudolph (eds), *Education and Politics in India* (Cambridge: Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972).
2. The idea of a symbolic-instrumental continuum was suggested by Professor James W. Gair of Cornell University.

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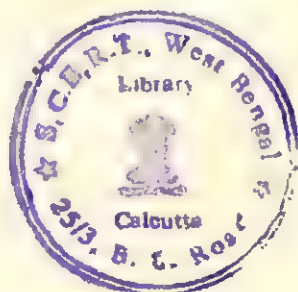
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